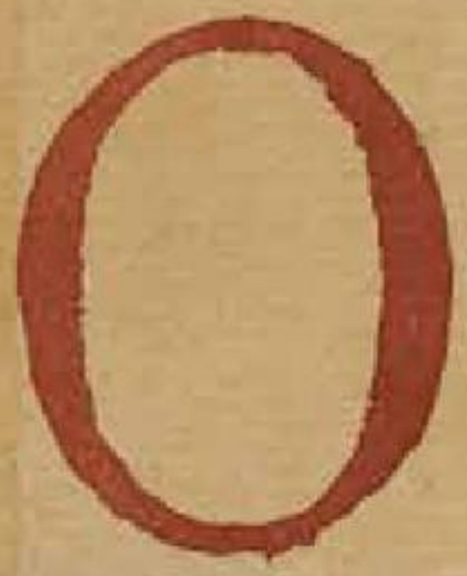
Paul Klee

The Bauhaus Years



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Works from 1918–1931

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Curated by Olivier Berggruen

Dickinson New York

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Foreword

We are delighted to be presenting this survey of Paul Klee's work from the Bauhaus years.

Klee's delicate works are not always accessible, and this is a rare opportunity to see a high-caliber group from a crucial period of his career. I must highlight our immense gratitude to our lenders; their generosity has made this possible.

We would also like to thank Michael Baumgartner of the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, and Stefan Frey of the Klee-Nachlassverwaltung. They have been central to this project from the outset, and their involvement vital to its success.

Rémi Labrusse, for his insightful essay exploring, among other themes, Klee's relationship to Oriental art, deserves special mention. As do the following: Richard Armstrong, Bettina Berggruen, Roxana Bruno Lamb, Susan Davidson, Peter Fischer, Heidi Frautschi, Carmen Giménez, Diana Howard, Sam Keller, Adriana Kertzer, Anne-Marie and Alexander Klee-Coll, Perrine Le Blan, Marco Lorenzetti, Daniel and Laetitia Malingue, Sabine Rewald, Andres Santo-Domingo, Timothy Stranding, Mebrak Tareke, Karole Vail, Michele Welsing, Pascale Willi, Aroldo Zevi, Elisabetta Zevi, Susanna Zevi, and The Clarice Lispector Estate.

Finally I must thank our curator. Olivier's pedigree in the field of Klee is well known. Indeed, this is his fourth exhibition on an artist with whom the name Berggruen is synonymous, and we are privileged that he agreed to mastermind this show. He has graciously shared his insight throughout our collaboration, and both his scholarship and his company have been extremely rewarding.

Olivier was determined that this project should add something to the field of Klee scholarship. This beautiful catalogue stands as testament to that achievement.

Hugo Nathan
President, Dickinson Roundell Inc

Transparent Images

Olivier Berggruen

If I take too long to look at "Paysage aux oiseaux jaunes," by Klee, I will never be able to go back to it. Courage and cowardice are a game one plays at every moment. It scares the perhaps incurable vision and that is perhaps that of freedom. The habit of looking through prison gates, the comfort of holding with both hands the bars, while I am still looking. The prison is safety, the bars support for the hands. So I recognize that freedom is only for the very few. Again courage and cowardice play at each other: courage, of which I am capable, scares me. For I know that courage is possible for me. I begin to think that among the insane there are those who are not insane. And that possibility, when truly realized, is not to be understood. And as the person tries to explain, she will be losing courage, she will be asking; "Paysage aux oiseaux jaunes" does not ask. At least I calculate what would be freedom. And that is what makes the security of the bars intolerable; the comfort of this prison hits me in the face. . . .[1]

We might not share the sense of dread Clarice Lispector felt when she saw Paul Klee's painting. Instead, we might see a rather poetic and whimsical vision of a tropical forest during the full moon. The artist seems to have bestowed upon nature—the sky, plants and other living things—an enchanted character, not unlike that of a German Romantic fairy tale. Like a fairy tale, it does not seem threatening at first glance. Yet Clarice's words evoke emotional anguish. Could Klee be presenting us with a more sinister tale than we had first imagined?

After the Second World War, the Brazilian novelist was living a rather secluded life in provincial Bern, where her husband was working as a diplomat. In a letter to her sister Tania, she described Switzerland as a "cemetery of sensations."[2] For Clarice, emotional resonance was to be found in other realms—and it was presumably while living in Switzerland that she became acquainted with Klee's work. She was struck by his ability to offer transparent images of the soul, transforming inner thoughts into visionary pictorial expressions.

In *Landschaft mit gelben Vögeln* (*Landscape with Yellow Birds*), plants, flowers, living beings seem to have regained their original purity, resembling dangerous and seductive creatures. They confront the viewer with a vision of cosmic excess, akin to a psychedelic experience, both magical and terrifying.

Paul Klee. *Landschaft mit gelben Vögeln* (*Landscape with Yellow Birds*). 1923
pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
35.5 x 44 cm (14 x 17 ¼ inches)
Private collection, Switzerland

Klee looked at the world as if he were dreaming with his eyes wide open, following Novalis's edict that if dreams become reality, reality should also be oneiric—a fundamental tenet of early Romanticism. Just like German Romantic fairy tales, Klee's paintings reflect the strangeness of the world, tinged with dark shadows and enigmatic forms. Unsettling, because it is an extreme version of reality, heightening our sense of wonder at that which only ends up being elusive. Despite all they reveal about alternate forms of consciousness, Klee's dreamscapes do not give us all the answers we are looking for. Rather, they expose our unfulfilled desires by disclosing what is buried in dreams or in the unconscious.

Landschaft mit gelben Vögeln was painted during a period of great creative effervescence. During his tenure at the Bauhaus, Klee devoted himself to picture theory—including a preoccupation with the interaction of colors. In his watercolors from that period, Klee devised tonal, chromatic progressions of rectangular planes, allowing them to give off a shimmering light effect. He often showed these pictures to his students, with whom he discussed color theory and composition. At the same time, he painted a series of imaginary landscapes that foreshadowed Surrealist experiments. Tightrope walkers, monstrous animals, melancholy dancers (*Tanz des trauernden Kindes* [*Dance of the Grieving Child*], 1922, plate 12) and extraterrestrial figures inhabit these undetermined spaces, as in a hazy dream (the "interior gaze" of the Surrealists).

Klee's works are imbued with an organic spontaneity, one that affirms his kinship with nature. The artist ceaselessly proclaimed his desire to be at one with the natural world. He told his students at the Bauhaus, "The artist is a human being, himself nature and a part in the realm of nature." For Klee, the feeling of being at one with nature was born out of the "discovery of unsuspected relations from one element to another."[3] To this end, he assembled a collection of natural specimens, such as herbs, leaves, flowers, algae, moss, butterflies, stones and crystals, carefully studying their colors, shapes and structures. He also dissected various plants and fruits to learn about their internal structure, delving beyond their external appearance. The vein of a leaf, the grooves in a piece of bark, a snail's shell (*Im Zeichen der Schnecke* [*Under the Sign of the Snail*], 1921, plate 6): Klee reproduces this vast dictionary of forms endlessly, providing a model for artistic creation, one that could be manipulated through growth, repetition or extension.

Klee's desire to be in tune with the realm of nature coincided with his quest for greater innocence. In this sense, he echoed the preoccupation

of the Romantics with the question of how painting could free itself from the weight of constricting traditions. By the end of the eighteenth century, Jacques-Louis David had deplored the conventions of artistic education, holding them responsible for the decline of the arts. Joshua Reynolds proclaimed that it was necessary to relearn the craft of painting, away from all stifling rules. For his part, Philipp Otto Runge declared that in order to succeed, we had to become like children again.

By turning his back on academic rules, could the artist reach a state of innocence and purity that would give us an unmediated image of the world? Was it necessary to strip a language of its conventions, so as to embrace the realm of nature, directly? According to this aesthetic stance, intuition was crucial to artistic practice, and one had to strive to communicate ideas and feelings derived from nature, using the simplest of forms, as in *Die Schlange* (*The Snake*), 1929 (plate 28).

Years later, when Klee knew death was nearing, his paintings and drawings took on a more explicitly terrifying, anguished appearance. Perverse-looking forms, neither animal nor vegetal, fantastical plants—incomplete, thirsty and impoverished—are recurring motifs in Klee's later works. Unlike Picasso's defacements of his mistress Dora Maar dating from the same period, there is nothing heroic about Klee's wounded creatures. Primal images are imbued with the sadness and indifference that characterizes nature. The human presence is reduced to a primitive force that is competing with other forces of nature. The artist's tendency to identify with nature's dark and primitive urges is probably what Clarice sensed in *Landschaft mit gelben Vögeln*, although it still has remnants of an idealization that is discarded in later works.

Ultimately, Klee offers us pictures of reality that probe more deeply than the ordinary gaze. His art is intent on exploring the correspondence between the interior landscape of the soul and the outer realm of nature, rendering them both immediate and transparent. Looking at his paintings, we recognize signs that stand out among an array of other more mundane, day-to-day signs. Klee's images speak directly to our consciousness, seizing upon memories of dreams, be they fractured, sinister, charmed or even blissful. This other layer of reality casts a spell over the viewer, allowing him to survey the territory of various states of consciousness with greater clarity.

Notes:

1. Clarice Lispector, *Para não esquecer: Crônicas* (São Paulo: Atica, 1979), pp. 14–15. Here translated from the Portuguese by Adriana Kertzer.
2. Olga Borelli, *Clarice Lispector: Esboço para um possível retrato* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1981), p. 114.
3. René Crevel, *Paul Klee* (Paris: Gallimard, 1930), p. 10.

Imaginary Logic

Rémi Labrusse

Kairuan oder eine Geschichte vom Maler Klee und von der Kunst dieses Zeitalters (Kairouan, or the story of the painter Klee and of the art of this time), Wilhelm Hausenstein's book published in Munich in 1921, was not the first monograph on Klee—two smaller books had been published the year before, one by Leopold Zahn, the other by Hermann von Wedderkop—but it was unquestionably the most ambitious of the three, visually and intellectually.[1] The author, who was fairly influential in the leftist avant-garde circles of Munich in the 1910s, had been traumatized by the war and, as a consequence, had become a follower of Oswald Spengler's pessimistic philosophy, which had recently been expounded in Spengler's highly successful work *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (The decline of the West). Hausenstein saw Klee's art as the embodiment of a kind of hybrid nihilism, with an "Oriental" side that had first come to light during the artist's stay in the Tunisian city of Kairouan (al-Qayrawan) in April 1914, and a modern "European" side that had been brought to the fore by the disaster of the Great War. According to Hausenstein's vision, the Oriental side of Klee's genius was of a metaphysical nature: the intuition of a sort of Buddhist nothingness allowed the artist to free himself from the world of things and to rejoice in pure subjectivity; but the shock of the war had caused his work to fall from metaphysics into history, from mystical wisdom to individual despair, and to become, for that reason, self-destructive and tragic: "Kairouan and the European War: from the higher nothingness, the painter-draughtsman was thrown into the lower nothingness," the critic wrote in the central chapter of his monograph, titled "The Hereafter and the War."[2]

Understandably, Klee was not particularly satisfied with this interpretation; soon after, he split with Hausenstein, who became increasingly conservative and embittered in his writings on contemporary art.[3] What upset the artist

was the pessimism of a dualist vision that was not overcome by a dynamic synthesis, as Klee would have wished. However, there can be no doubt that the great significance of Kairouan had been suggested to Hausenstein by Klee himself, who was busy imbuing himself with an Oriental aura and designated the city of Kairouan as the umbilical cord of his mystical Orient, where, he used to say, he had acquired his identity as a painter in April 1914. No later than May 1914, a few days after his return from Tunisia, he proudly displayed eight watercolors he had brought back at the Neue Münchner Secession exhibition, in Munich. From 1919 on, he strongly emphasized his privileged relationship to the Orient, even suggesting that his dusky complexion and dark eyes hinted at Oriental roots, via his Swiss mother, whose origins were in part Southern French (and might possibly be more exotic still).[4] Around the end of 1921, he rewrote his Tunisian diary: in the final version, before leaving for Kairouan, he asks himself whether that could be his "native country"; and soon after, in 1922, he fabricated a self-portrait puppet that recalls the clichés of the Oriental magus: dark hair, gigantic eyes, threadbare robe covering the whole body [fig. 1]. Meanwhile, he had convinced his earliest commentators that the trip to Tunisia had been fundamental to him: Tunisian watercolors are reproduced at the beginning of the books by Zahn, Wedderkop and Hausenstein, and in all three of them the trip to Tunisia is described in almost the same words, as the decisive moment of discovery, by Klee, of his deepest and truest artistic being, through the revelation of color. Zahn even points out, "When I speak of Paul Klee's art, the body of work to which I refer derives from these watercolors [from Tunisia]; the sheets made before 1914 can be considered separately as its prehistory";[5] and Hausenstein speaks of Klee's Tunisian trip as "a journey to himself."[6] Klee's own rewritten diary constitutes the acme of this Oriental narrative.

Fig. 1. Paul Klee. *Self-Portrait in Oriental Dress.* 1922 hand puppet, various materials, h. 38 cm (15 inches) Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

In a letter to his wife, Lily, the short halt in Kairouan—less than two days, between April 16 and 17, 1914—is described as the "zenith" (*Höhepunkt*) and "final goal" of the trip and the scene of a supreme revelatory event.[7] In Kairouan, what is abruptly unveiled, we are told, is a place of origin.[8] There, the artist discovers and fully espouses his identity as a painter, while he had mostly confined himself to drawing up to that point: "Here is the meaning of this magic hour. Color and I are one. I am a painter."[9] The slightly ironic tone of the diary entries before Kairouan—when Klee describes somewhat self-critically his wandering around Tunis with his two friends, August Macke and Louis Moilliet, in search of exoticism—suddenly ceases and gives way to a solitary Nietzschean exaltation of the Self. It takes on the appearance of a

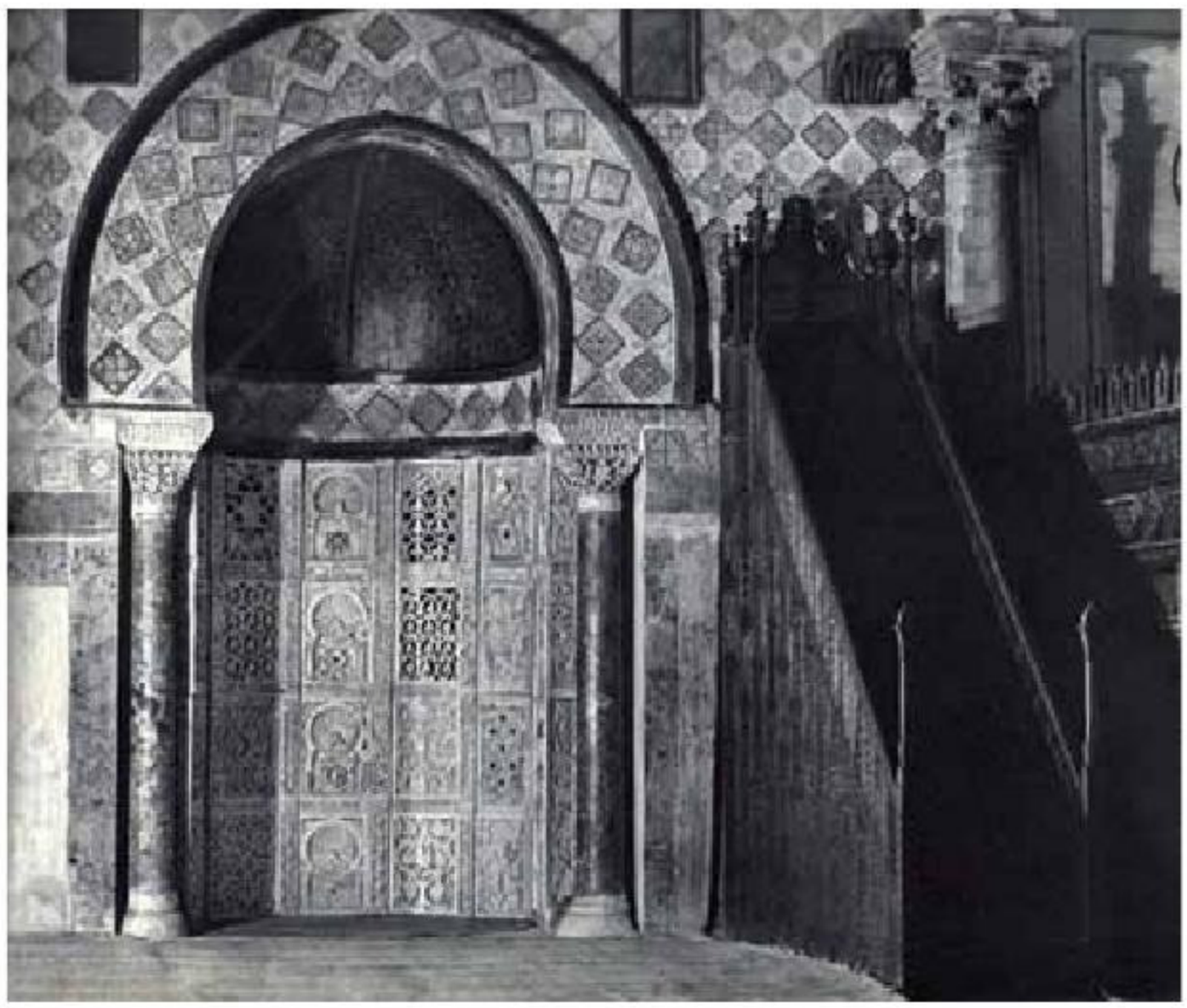


Fig. 2. Mihrab of the Mosque Sidi Oqba, Kairouan, first half of the ninth century, painted wood, lusterware, stucco and carved marble

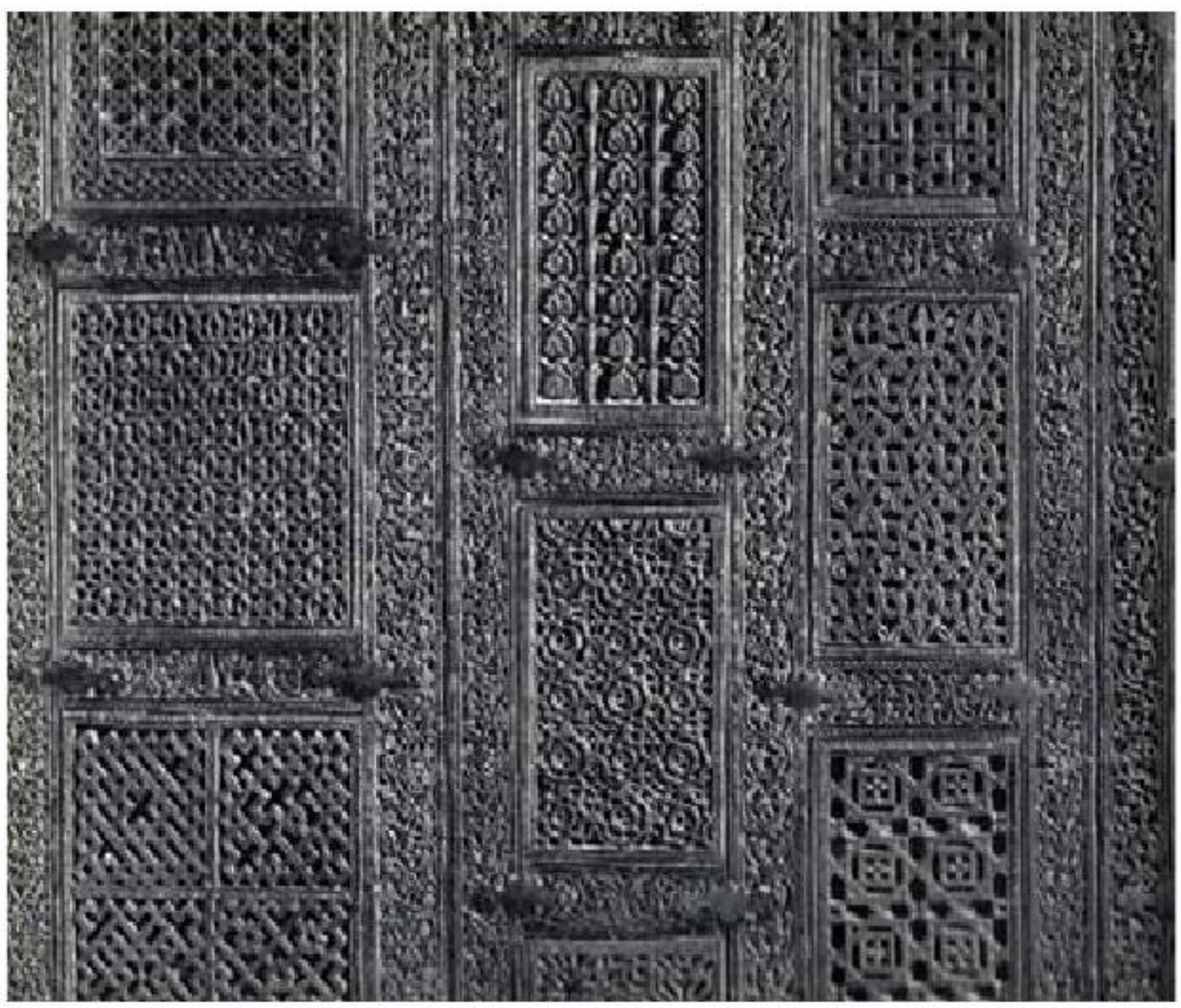


Fig. 3. Details of the minbar of the Mosque Sidi Oqba, Kairouan, c. 853–63, carved wood

revelation precisely because it is sudden and short—all the more violent and intense for its brevity. Forever changed by the shock, the newborn painter, once he has gone through this extreme Kairouan experience, has nothing else to do but return home: "Today, I needed to be alone; the experience I had just undergone was too strong. I had to leave, also, in order to pull myself together."[10]

Something unquestionably Orientalist, in Edward Said's sense of the word, lies in this story of the painter Klee finding himself in Kairouan. Think of Eugène Fromentin, among hundreds of other Orientalist painters of the previous century, who wrote in 1846, when he arrived in Algeria, "This is beautiful! This is beautiful! Everything is beautiful, even misery is beautiful, even the mud on the sandals! . . . God, if only this could make me a painter!"[11] In both cases, displacement creates identity, but it is an imaginary displacement, motivated by prejudices and representations originally formed in the West. The "Mother Orient" is fascinating insofar as it is relegated to an original past and disconnected from the present: therefore, everything that is given to the artist in this "timeless" Orient has to be appropriated, utilized and brought back to the present within a European framework. In the meantime, the real Other is positively reduced to silence (no Tunisian speaks about Tunisia in Klee's descriptions); and the myth itself is all the more potent to the extent that it remains vague and syncretic. This is clearly expressed in Hausenstein's pages, where Klee's "Arabic polarity" (as opposed to his "European" one)[12] has less to do with any kind of Islamic thinking than with a superficial Westernized Buddhism, mediated by the reading of Spengler and, further back, of Schopenhauer. The grossest clichés about the Orient, land of camels, black men and limitless sands, oddly serve to introduce a Far Eastern philosophy of impermanence: "The sable camels walked now as before in the nothingness of the desert, carrying black men whose senses were filled with music and by the belief that Nothingness was everything and that everything was nothing. At home, such was the traveller now. . . . He painted . . . with a secret instinct, also celebrating the equanimity of Buddha, who, thousands of miles away, dwelt in the immutability of his images. . . . Kairouan. The name became a symbol for a manifold experience. In the East, what was to be discovered or confirmed was that in actuality things are without substance."[13]

If Klee's Orient is vague and syncretic, Kairouan, however, is not a vague location at all: it is a real city with a strong artistic identity. The site of Klee's artistic birth at the beginning of the twentieth century seems to have lacked

any immediate attractive power for the average Orientalist painter. One of them, Ary Renan (son of the renowned philologist Ernest Renan) described the city in 1891 as an isolated place set in "a repellent and sullen desert," with "no Kasbah worthy of the name," and generally lacking "picturesqueness, which thrives at every street corner in the Tunisian cities along the coast."[14] The writer Guy de Maupassant, in turn, exclaimed in 1889, "Oh, what a sad city lost in the desert!" (but immediately felt "an unexpected and shattering emotion" in the great mosque).[15] Easy to reach by train from Tunis, Kairouan did not even possess an aura of remoteness. Without vast palm groves or bustling souks, the pride of the city lies elsewhere: in its ancient, rather severe religious monuments, which are among the greatest architectural realizations of Islamic art—first among them the gigantic architectural complex of the ninth-century Aghlabid Mosque of Sidi Oqba, which in Klee's time was, paradoxically, the only Muslim temple in Tunisia whose interior was open to non-Muslim visitors.[16] In the afternoon of April 16, 1914, Klee and his friends visited some of Kairouan's old mosques, in particular Sidi Oqba. On this occasion, they appreciated this construction, with its pure and simple lines, that leads the faithful to the extraordinary ornamental flourishes of the mihrab [fig. 2] (with its luxurious lusterware tiles especially imported from Baghdad at the time of its construction) and the wooden minbar [fig. 3]. One may assume that Klee's true revelation, free from any superficial Orientalism, occurred during this visit. The recurring motif of graceful hemispheric domes, emblematic of Kairouan's mosques, present in the watercolors done on the spot or immediately afterward [fig. 4] and in his later paintings [fig. 11], constitutes a private sign of the durable impact of this revelation. It is also telling that, when he traveled to Egypt in 1928, Klee's first reaction was to prefer the "pure" mosques of Kairouan (seen almost fifteen years previously) to those of Cairo, which he denounced as "kitsch" (even if, some days later, he acknowledged the magnificence of the thirteenth-to-fourteenth-century tombs of the Mamluk sultans of Cairo).[17] In Kairouan, and nowhere else, Klee's dreamlike exoticism—imbued with a fanciful, somewhat stereotypical biblical atmosphere—was transformed in a direct encounter with the deepest realizations of Islamic aesthetics, something that he saw as a profound disruption in his artistic career and a new beginning.

In January 1921, when Klee arrived in Weimar and was enrolled by Walter Gropius as a teacher at the Bauhaus, he was fully committed to the elaboration and diffusion of his private Kairouan mythology. As Jenny Anger has shown, this myth is also connected to his celebration of the intrinsic

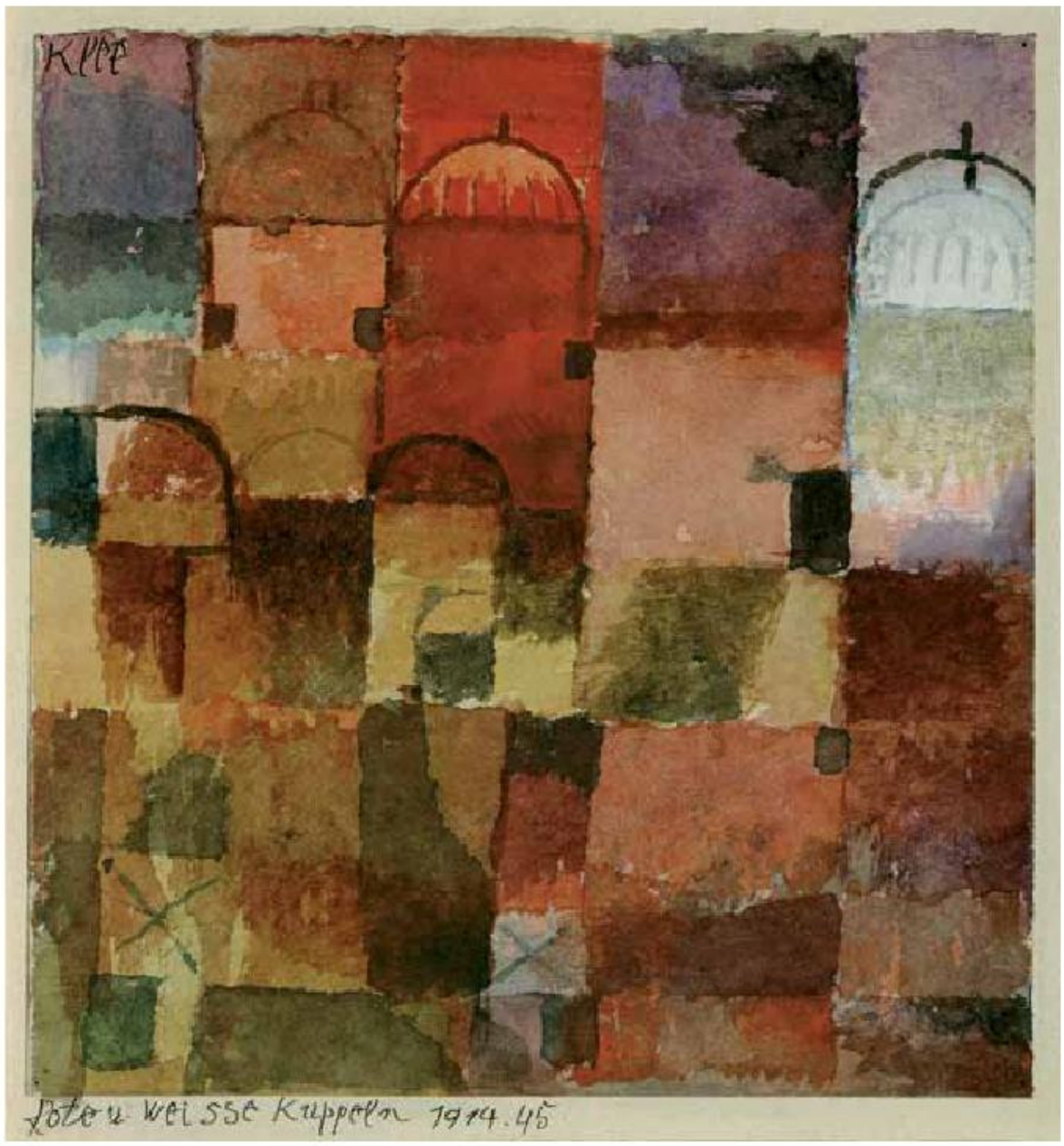


Fig. 4. Paul Klee. *Rote und weisse Kuppeln* (*Red and White Cupolas*). 1914
watercolor and gouache on paper, 14.6 x 13.7 cm (5 ¾ x 5 ½ inches)
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, n° 1014 (cat. Klee, vol. 2, 1154)

Fig. 5. Owen Jones. *Moresque n° 5*, pl. XLIII of *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856

Fig. 6. Owen Jones. *Persian n° 2*, pl. XLV of *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856

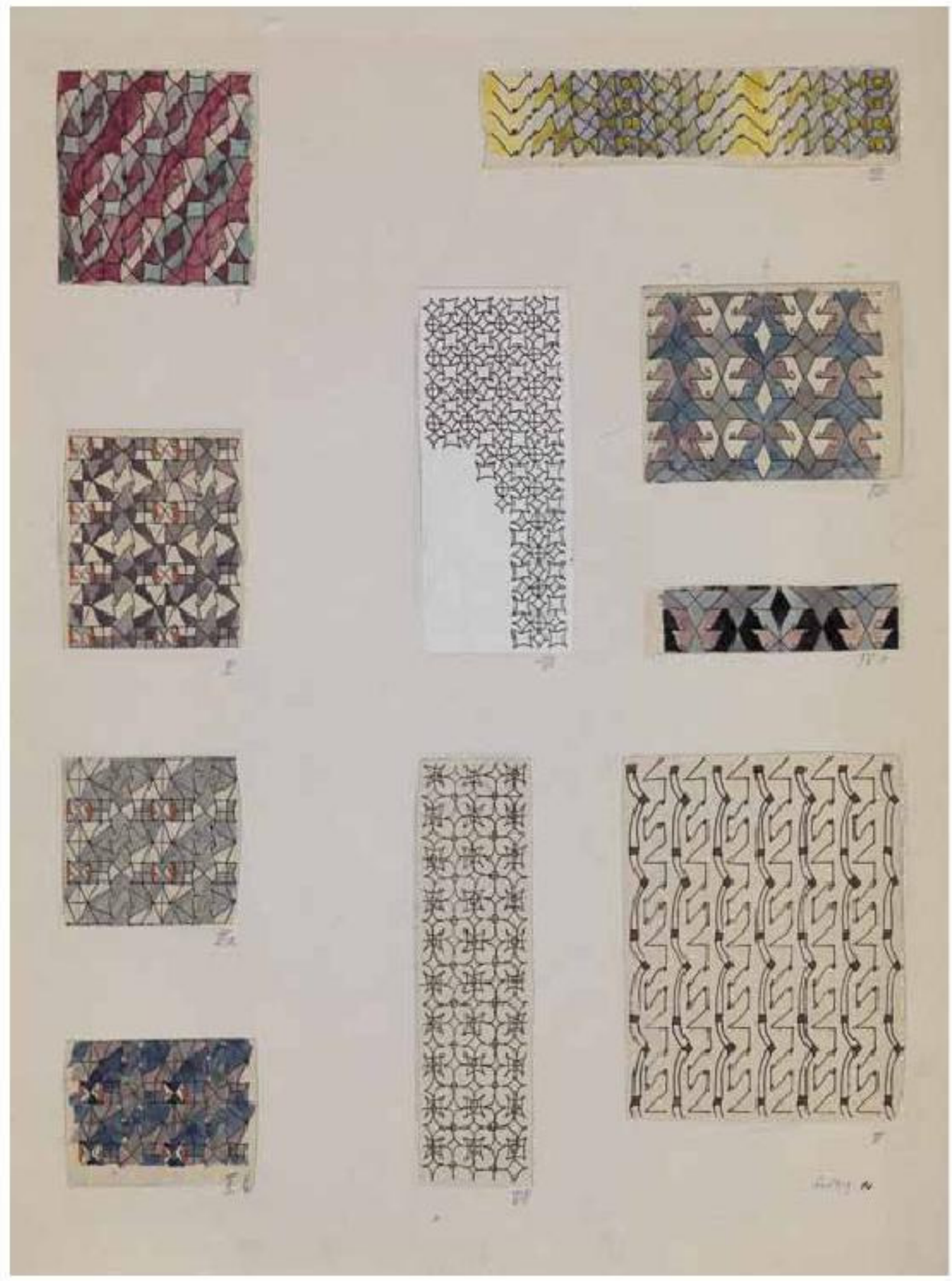


Fig. 7. Paul Klee. *Diverse Entwürfe für Vorsatzpapier* (*Diverse Sketches for Endpapers*). 1909
ink and watercolor on paper, various studies on paper pasted on cardboard
Paul-Klee Stiftung, Bern, Z 137 (cat. Klee, vol. 1, 401)

value of the decorative in modern art.[18] Certainly, Klee's leanings toward ornamentation precede his discovery of Islamic decoration in Kairouan: as early as 1909, a series of small abstract patterns [fig. 7] irresistibly recalls the plates in the collections of ornamental models that, in the wake of Owen Jones's famous *Grammar of Ornament* of 1856 [figs. 5 and 6], flourished all over Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century and were found everywhere, in studios, workshops, schools of art and museum libraries. But even more significant than the date of creation of Klee's decorative patterns is the fact that he decided to paste them all onto a single sheet and to place it in his catalogue raisonné as an example of the early stages of his work (when he might well have excluded or even destroyed these tiny, apparently insignificant formal games). This decision was taken in the early 1910s and must have been all the more conscious and programmatic as ornament was not really welcome in the artistic circles he knew. No later than 1913, Kandinsky wrote that, in an abstract painting, "the danger of an ornamental art had become clear to [him]"[19] and, in order to dispel this curse of the ornament, he forged the notion of "inner necessity" (*innere Notwendigkeit*), inseparable from his notion of the "spiritual in art." That which Kandinsky rejected for spiritual reasons or Adolf Loos for political reasons was also more or less plainly cast aside by Gropius and many of his allies at the Bauhaus: it was suspected of disguising the functional "truth" of pure industrial shapes and of threatening the economic viability of new design products. Contrasting with all these anti-ornament positions, Klee's delicate interweaving of "decorative" patterns, even in his most narrative works, did not fail to draw criticism. It even debarred him from the Fine Arts Academy in Stuttgart in 1919—although at that time the institution had been won over to the cause of the German avant-garde. Oskar Schlemmer wrote to Klee on that occasion that he had been criticized not only for his dreamlike fantasy but also for the "playful" and "feminine" quality of his work[20]—a customary characterization of ornament as a minor art.

In Klee's taking up the challenge of decorativeness in the historical context of the avant-garde, there can be no doubt that the Kairouan experience played a decisive role. It helped Klee to convince himself of the full historical legitimacy of ornamental aesthetics, combining the rigor of geometric laws and the unpredictability, the subtle unreliability, of human gestures. Hausenstein, for instance, commemorates the triumph of the "arabesque" in the painter's work from 1914 onward, since, we are told, his "Arabic mind" was finally satisfied with "the multiple meanings that can only

invest ornamental forms" and with the "rhythm of decorations" in which, "like the Believers in the Prophet," he found "the ultimate meaning of life."[21] We find similar, if less developed, appreciations of Klee's love of the arabesque in Wedderkop's and Zahn's books—which suggests that these ideas were, to some extent, directly inspired by the artist. Consciously or not, Klee was thus following the path of major nineteenth-century reformers of ornament, who very often had a first, decisive experience of Islamic arts in situ—such as the British architect Owen Jones in the Alhambra or the Frenchman Jules Bourgoin in Cairo—and then systematically referred to Islamic art in order to free ornamentation from its subservience to the so-called higher arts of painting and sculpture. Hostile to Orientalism in all its guises, they drew on this appreciation of the scientific bias in Islamic patterns in order to reconcile science and art, objectivity and subjectivity, in the context of a modern industrial culture—a goal shared by Gropius during the first years of the Bauhaus. No wonder, therefore, that Klee's graphic notes for his teachings closely resemble the visual experiments of these nineteenth-century theoreticians. Like Owen Jones, for instance, who used to say that the ornamentations of the Alhambra, based on the combination of a few structuring elements, were "infinite, like the combinations of the seven notes of the musical scale,"[22] Klee resorted to the musical notion of variation in order to illustrate the logical production of an infinite variety of forms from a finite set of simple geometric forms and primary colors [fig. 10].

Among the European theoreticians on ornament, Jules Bourgoin is a particularly interesting case, as he was obsessed by the need to counterbalance the scientific construction of form—by which he was also fascinated [fig. 8]—with the physical implication of the individual. Trying to keep both sides together, he forged the idea of an "aesthetic geometry," both rigorously scientific and unpredictably creative, which he opposed to a "scholastic" one, strictly confined to the limits of practical logic and favored by modern industry.[23] Hence his systematic promotion of freehand drawing and his deep interest in the patterning of knots [fig. 9], emblems of the infinite inventiveness and physical flexibility of a human gesture, as opposed to impersonal fixed patterns. A similar kind of attraction is expressed in Klee's *Wege zum Knoten* (*Paths to the Knot*) [plate. 29], in which the loose arabesques suggest to the spectator's mind a myriad of possible movements—an impression that the artist might have experienced for himself in front of the splendid, ever-changing patchwork of floral and geometric patterns in the venerable minbar of the Great Mosque in Kairouan [fig. 3].

There can be no doubt that his enrollment at the Bauhaus enhanced Klee's appreciation for the power of pure geometric forms, scientifically arranged, particularly when, at the end of 1923, the school took a more pragmatic turn and Gropius distanced himself from the ideal of a junction between material production and "spiritual" speculations. Klee's specific ornamentalism, however, always stood apart from spiritual abstraction as well as functional materialism. Clearly, what drove him to ornamental forms was their visual and semiotic instability, the suggestion of movement, the specific power that allows a sinuous line to become (but never fixedly) a snake [plate. 28], a loose knot [plate. 29] or a reflection of the sun on water [plate. 27]—what Olivier Berggruen once described as Klee's "ideal of the image-sign," as embodied by his "obsessive arabesque."[24] This is also why he was so moved by textiles (in sympathy with Gunta Stölzl's textile workshop at the Bauhaus) and based numerous works, before and after Kairouan, until the very end of his life, on what can be named a poetics of the carpet [plates. 16 and 17]. A carpet is not only a fundamentally movable object, not only a surface on which the threads of colored wool, cotton or silk blur the contours between compartments of pure color and blend them together; it is also an art of undulating geometry, which submits the technical requirements of mechanical production (through the weaving loom) to the intuitive decisions of individual craftsmanship. Both pragmatically and aesthetically, it favors movement, changeability and unpredictability within a predetermined symmetrical scheme, something echoed in Klee's trembling lines and color patches overflowing their contours in his gridlike compositions [plate. 15].

In his teaching notes at the Bauhaus, Klee systematically warns his students against the danger of a "legalistic exhaustion" of the creative impulse and recurs to the notion of "life" to counteract this tragic impoverishment.[25] "Movement" is the keyword in this context, an "initial productive movement," he says, "a spark comes from we know not where, which smolders in a man's mind, then kindles it, moves his hand and, from then on, transfers this movement to matter, becoming a work of art."[26] What does he mean when he speaks of life in an inanimate image, and of movement to characterize a composition of fixed forms? No doubt, for his students, he positioned himself against the dogmatic systematism of geometric abstraction as well as the processes of industrial design—a stand that made him feel increasingly isolated and ill at ease in Bauhaus circles at the end of the twenties up to the time of his resignation in 1931. Nonetheless, as intentionally inchoate as his images and formal compositions

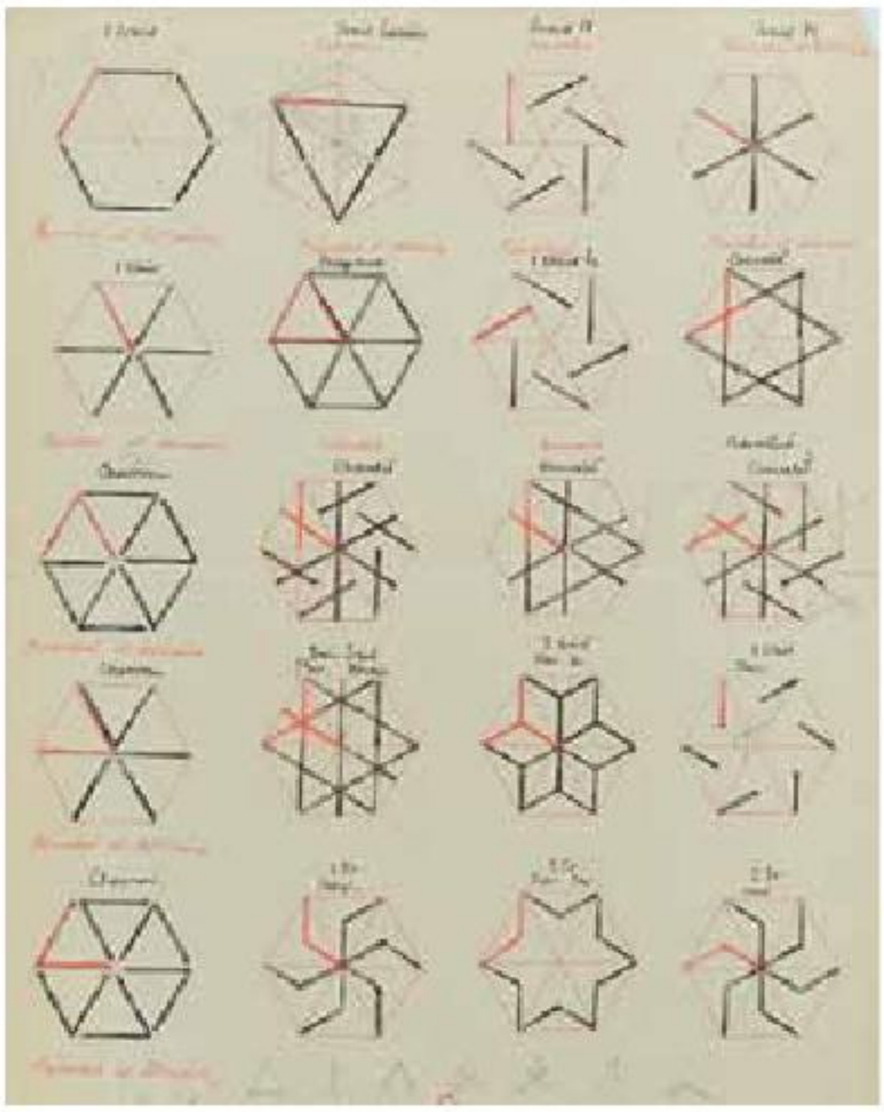


Fig. 8. Jules Bourgoin. Study for plates 152 and 153 of vol. II of *Etudes architectoniques et graphiques*, Paris, 1901
pencil and ink on paper, 20 x 15.3 cm (8 x 6 inches)
Paris, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, fonds Jacques Doucet

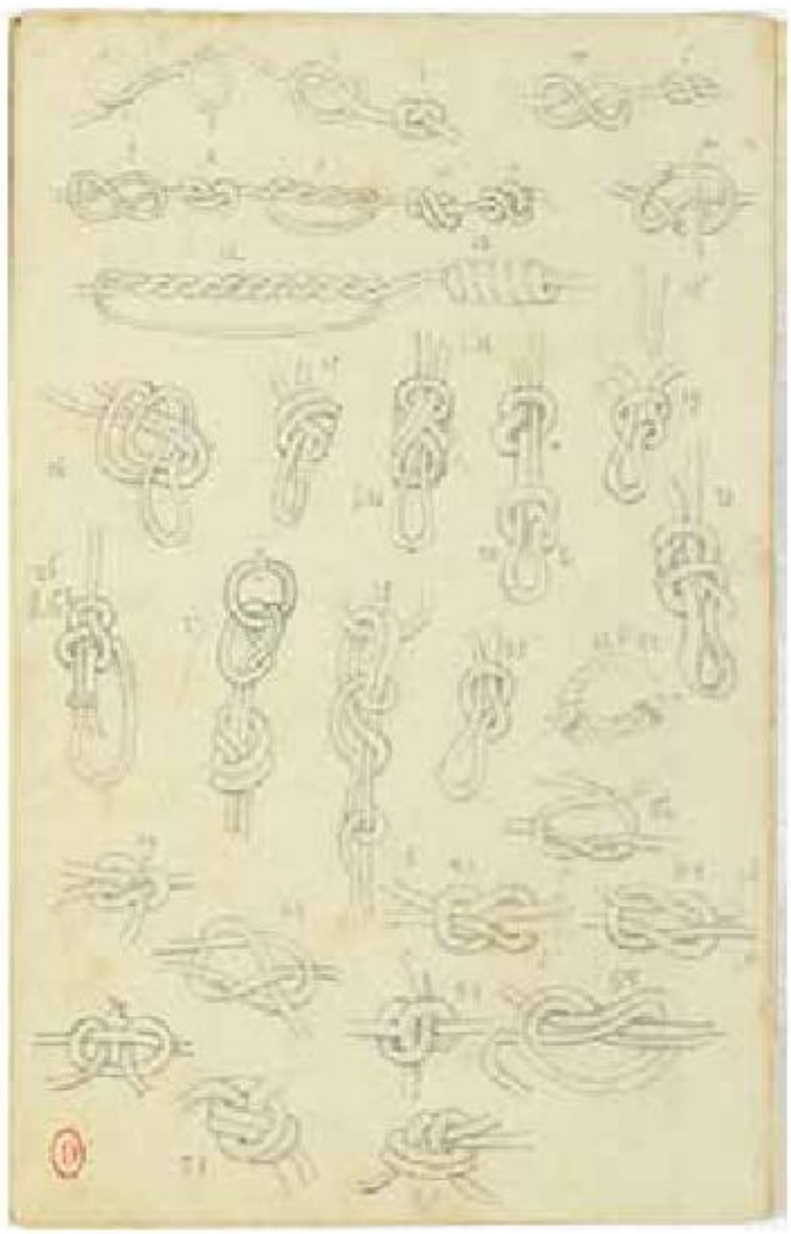


Fig. 9. Jules Bourgoin. *Noeuds simple* (*Simple Knots*). c. 1880–90
pencil on paper, 15.6 x 10 cm (6 ¼ x 4 inches)
Paris, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, fonds Jacques Doucet

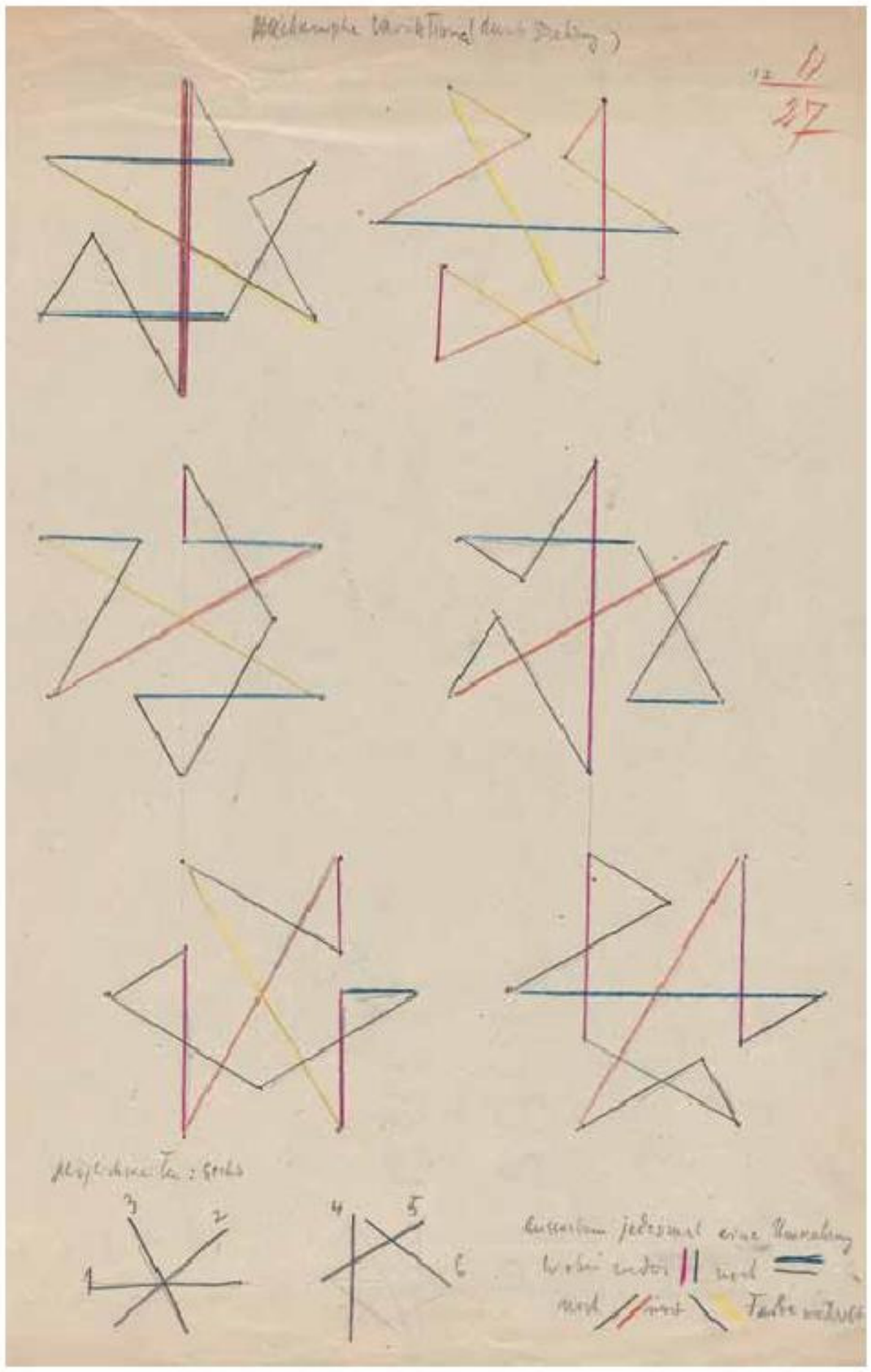


Fig. 10. Paul Klee. *Mechanische Variationen (durch Drehung)* (*Mechanical Variations [through Rotation]*). c. 1925–30
crayon and pencil on paper, 33 x 21 cm (13 x 8 ¼ inches)
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, PN12 M11/27

may be, they are not, for all that, living beings. Thus, the belief that it would be possible to carry the process of genesis into its final result and to fuse together a creative impetus and a created object belongs to the utopian fantasy of merging organic life and material work. We can surmise that this kind of animism—one of the prevailing myths of the early avant-gardes—was alien to Klee, not only because he never explicitly expressed such a view but also because the fundamental structure of his work hints at a very different understanding of what life can mean in an image.

It is a commonplace that Klee's work is characterized by a continuous tension between a narrative and a formal aspect, *poesis* and *pictura*: in his paintings, the suggestion of imaginary worlds and stories, through dreamlike settings and figures, plunging the mind into another spatiotemporal environment, is insistently set against the immediate physical impression of self-sufficient visual forms, with their arabesques, geometrical patterns and interwoven color fields, redirecting the spectator's gaze to his perception here and now. Applying racial schemes (typical of nineteenth-century anthropology) to this dualism, Hausenstein rigidly opposed, in Klee's case, an "Arabic" side, in thrall to the arabesque, and a Nordic "barbarian" side that was responsible for the transformation of these arabesques into runes and of these formal decorative compositions into mythic fables.[27] Even if Klee himself never developed such an pseudo-anthropological dualism, he nonetheless based his Bauhaus teaching on the analysis of his own works, both figurative and non-figurative, asking his students to deconstruct them (as, he used to say, a child is allowed to tear apart his toy in order to examine its components). At the Bauhaus they would have seen how their master's formalist decorativeness was counterbalanced structurally by the literary suggestiveness of dreams, just as, in Kairouan, his Orientalist fantasies had been pervaded and internally criticized by his meditation on Islamic architecture and ornament. In all his works, from the more abstract to the more emphatically narrative, reason and dreams, geometric ornament and discursive imagery, rub against each other in a fundamentally dialectical manner: ornamental forms appear almost animated, transformed into imaginary bodies and, conversely, a rigorous ornamental grammar deconstructs this nascent fiction and substitutes for them constellations of disembodied motifs. This is particularly clear in Klee's use of isolated letters or numbers in compositions where they play their parts as ornamental components while appearing as enigmatic remnants of some semi-erased inscription [plates. 15 and 19]. Again, a similar effect is produced by the many

pseudo-calligraphic images (a decorative method also present in the luster tiles of the mihrab in Kairouan and pervasive in almost all periods of Islamic arts). A late work like *Grenze* (*Frontier*) [fig. 12], of 1938, provides us with a paradigmatic example of this constant shift between the realm of ornament and the realm of dream, denying the eye any univocal interpretation of these signs that are neither figurative nor semeiological, with facial features instantly lost in sequences of undecipherable hieroglyphic runes. The same can be said, from another point of view, of the splendid 1931 *Überbrücktes* (*Bridged*) [plate. 30], another emblematic title that, like *Grenze*, not only describes literally what is depicted in the image but also brings to mind the programmatic idea of trespassing or *bridging* the frontiers between heterogeneous visual regimes. Let us add that this process of "bridging" appears, not without humor, to be eminently fragile and transient, since the apparent stability of the little acrobat on the top of the painting seems to be seriously challenged by the collapse of his ledge—a strange and somewhat scary mixture of geometric elements and half-formed human figures, all on the verge of falling into a formless, inextricable mess.

In short, two processes of disembodiment are systematically combating each other within Klee's creations: the bodily subjective experience of the creative Self is simultaneously transformed into a pure music of forms and throngs of oneiric figures, playing their parts on a theatrical stage. There is no place here for the pseudo-animism of the image as a living body per se. Yet, life is involved insofar as neither of these disembodying processes ever succeeds in imposing imaginary representations or abstract patterns. Thus, neither narrative images nor ornamental configurations ever stand in for life. Life spreads from the image negatively, so to speak, because this strange combination of incompatible formal systems never reaches its full realization. It remains an unstable structure of conflicting forces, to which the spectator is unable to apply a clear visible code. These compositions do not provide any definitions on the nature of art; through their disorderly ornamental impetus, they leave the eye with unending questions about the reasons why the imaging process, as a fatal trait of human behavior, unceasingly tries to substitute dreams for life. In these fleeting, self-critical works, Western vision explores time and again its own uncertainties, as if the dialectics of image and ornament were too deeply rooted in the artist's mind to allow a stable definition of art anymore.

Fig. 11. Paul Klee. *Vierteiliger Palast* (*Palace in Four Parts*). 1933
watercolor and ink on canvas
90.5 x 68 cm (35 ½ x 26 ¾ inches)
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, 3089 (cat. Klee, vol. 6, 6401)

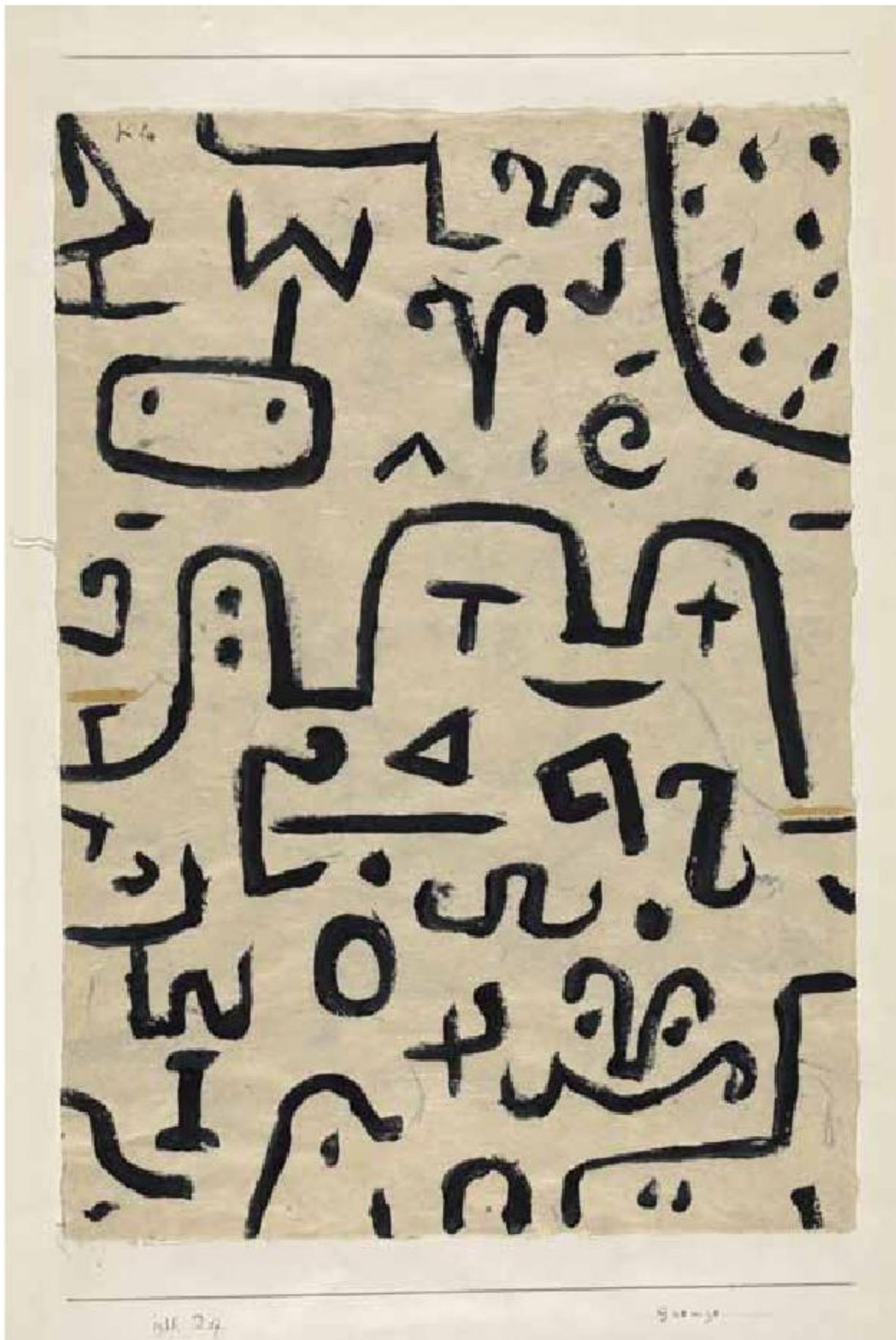


Fig 12. Paul Klee. *Grenze* (*Frontier*). 1938
oil painting on paper laid down on cardboard
50 x 35 cm (19 ½ x 13 ¾ inches)
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

Notes:

I am grateful to Olivier Berggruen, Michael Stokes and Lulu Norman for all their help and advice.

1. Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Kairuan oder eine Geschichte vom Maler Klee und von der Kunst dieses Zeitalters* (Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1921); Hermann von Wedderkop, *Paul Klee* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann), 1920; Leopold Zahn, *Paul Klee: Leben/Werk/Geist* (Potsdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1920).
2. Hausenstein, *Kairuan*, p. 91 ("Kairuan und der europäische Krieg: aus dem oberen Nichts war der Malerzeichner in das untere Nichts geschickt"). Throughout this essay, translations into English are by the author.
3. On Klee and Hausenstein, see Otto Karl Werckmeister, "Kairuan: Wilhelm Hausensteins Buch über Paul Klee," in *Die Tunisreise: Klee, Macke, Moilliet*, ed. Ernst-Gerhard Güse (Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1982), pp. 76–93.
4. See Michael Baumgartner, "Paul Klee et le mythe de l'Orient," in *À la Recherche de l'Orient: Paul Klee; Tapis du souvenir*, ed. Michael Baumgartner, Carole Haensler, and Marianne Keller (Bern: Zentrum Paul Klee, and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009), pp. 130–43.
5. Zahn, *Paul Klee*, p. 14 ("In der Zielrichtung dieser Aquarelle liegt das nachfolgende Schaffen, auf das wir uns beziehen, wenn wir von der Kunst Paul Klees sprechen, deren Vorgeschichte wir aus den vor 1914 entstandenen Blättern entnehmen können").
6. Hausenstein, *Kairuan*, p. 29 ("Es war eine Ausfahrt des Menschen zu sich selbst").
7. Klee, letter to Lily Klee, Kairouan, April 14, 1914, in Paul Klee, *Briefe an die Familie*, vol. 2 (1907–1940), ed. Felix Klee (Cologne: DuMont, 1979), p. 784 ("Am letzten Ziel angelangt, zugleich dem Höhepunkt. Sonntag reise ich von Tunis ab").
8. The idea of Kairouan as a mystical ground for Klee's work is also expressed by Zahn, *Paul Klee*, p. 8: "Mystik ist hier das Wort, das die Lernbegierigen sättigt."
9. Klee, *Journal*, trans. Pierre Klossowski (1959; repr. Paris: Grasset, 1986), p. 282 (entry for April 17, 1914).
10. Ibid.
11. Eugène Fromentin, letters to Paul Bataillard, March 7 and 22, 1846, in *Lettres de jeunesse*, ed. Pierre Blanchon (Paris: Plon, 1909), pp. 171–72.
12. First draft for the third part of Hausenstein's monograph, written in 1920, as quoted in Werckmeister, "Kairuan," p. 83 ("Die Polarität des 'Arabischen' und des 'Europäischen' in Klees Kunst").
13. Hausenstein, *Kairuan*, p. 86 ("Die falben Kamele nach wie vor . . . in das Nichts der Wüste schritten, dunkle Männer tragend, denen der Sinn von Melodie erfüllt war und von dem Glauben, das Nichts sei alles, alles sei nichts. . . . Wie in der Heimat war nun der Reisende. . . . Er malte . . . mit einem geheimen Instinkt auch die Gelassenheit des Buddha verehrend, der Tausende von Meilen noch entfernt in der Unbeweglichkeit seiner Bilder wohnte") and p. 125 ("Kairuan. Der Name ward Symbol für eine vielfache Erfahrung. Östlich war, zu erkennen oder bestätigt zu finden, daß in der Tat die Dinge ohne Wesen sind").
14. Ary Renan, "L'Art arabe dans le Maghreb: Kairouan; Premier article," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, Paris, May 1, 1891, pp. 371 and 382.
15. Guy de Maupassant, "Vers Kairouan," in *Œuvres complètes: La Vie errante* (Paris: Louis Conard, 1909), pp. 211 and 217. Previously published in *Revue des deux mondes*, Paris, February 1, 1889.
16. See Alain Messaoudi, "Une patrimonialisation pas très catholique: Le touriste, le fidèle, la mosquée et l'administration coloniale en Tunisie," in *Tourisme, patrimoine et colonisation au Maghreb: Un nouveau chantier pour l'histoire?*, ed. Colette Zytnicki and Habib Kazdaghli (Madrid: Casa Vélasquez, 2011).
17. Klee, letters to Lily Klee from Cairo, December 1928, in *Lettres de l'époque du Bauhaus (1920–1930)*, trans. and ed. Anne-Sophie Petit-Emptaz (Tours, France: Farrago, 2004), pp. 164–70.
18. Jenny Anger, *Paul Klee and the Decorative in Modern Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
19. Wassily Kandinsky, *Regards sur le passé et autres textes 1912–1922*, ed. Jean-Paul Bouillon (Paris: Hermann, 1974), p. 110 ("Le danger d'un art ornemental m'apparaissait clairement" ["Die Gefahr der ornamentalen Form"]).
20. Oskar Schlemmer, letter to Klee, July 9, 1919, quoted in Anger, *Paul Klee*, p. 274 ("'Spielerisch, feminin' sind weitere Worte des Zweifels").
21. Hausenstein, *Kairuan*, p. 30 ("Von diesem arabischen Schädel behext verlangt sie alsbald nichts andres als Arabesken: Bänder aus Farbe, die durcheinander laufen; Vieldeutigkeit, die nur in Ornamenten Gestalt gewinnen kann—denn die Gläubigen des Propheten vermeiden die Abbildung der menschlichen Gestalt, ja der Dinge, und sie begnügen sich mit dem Rhythmus der Verzierungen, gewohnt, in ihnen den Tiefsinn des Lebens aufzuschreiben").
22. Owen Jones, "Lecture XX: An Attempt to Define the Principles Which Should Regulate Colour in the Decorative Arts," in *Lectures on the Results of the Exhibition Delivered before the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* (London: David Bogue, n.d. [1853]), p. 296.
23. Jules Bourgoin, *Les arts arabes: Architecture et le trait général de l'art arabe* (Paris: Veuve A. Morel et Cie, 1873 [1868–73]), p. 7.
24. Olivier Berggruen, "Alla ricerca di segni naturali," in *Paul Klee: La collezione Berggruen*, ed. Olivier Berggruen (Rome: Fondazione Memmo, and Milan: Skira, 2006), pp. 22–23.
25. Lesson 11, December 19, 1922, in *Klee, Cours du Bauhaus, Weimar 1921–1922: Contributions à la théorie de la forme picturale* (Paris: Hazan, 2004), pp. 216–17.
26. Lesson 7, February 27, 1922, in ibid., pp. 126–27.
27. Hausenstein, *Kairuan*, p. 30 ("Macht aber in ihm die Völkerwanderung der Vandalen . . . einen Rückweg, . . . so ist es nicht erstaunlich, daß diese Zeichnungen sich der Rune bedienen").

The Bauhaus Years

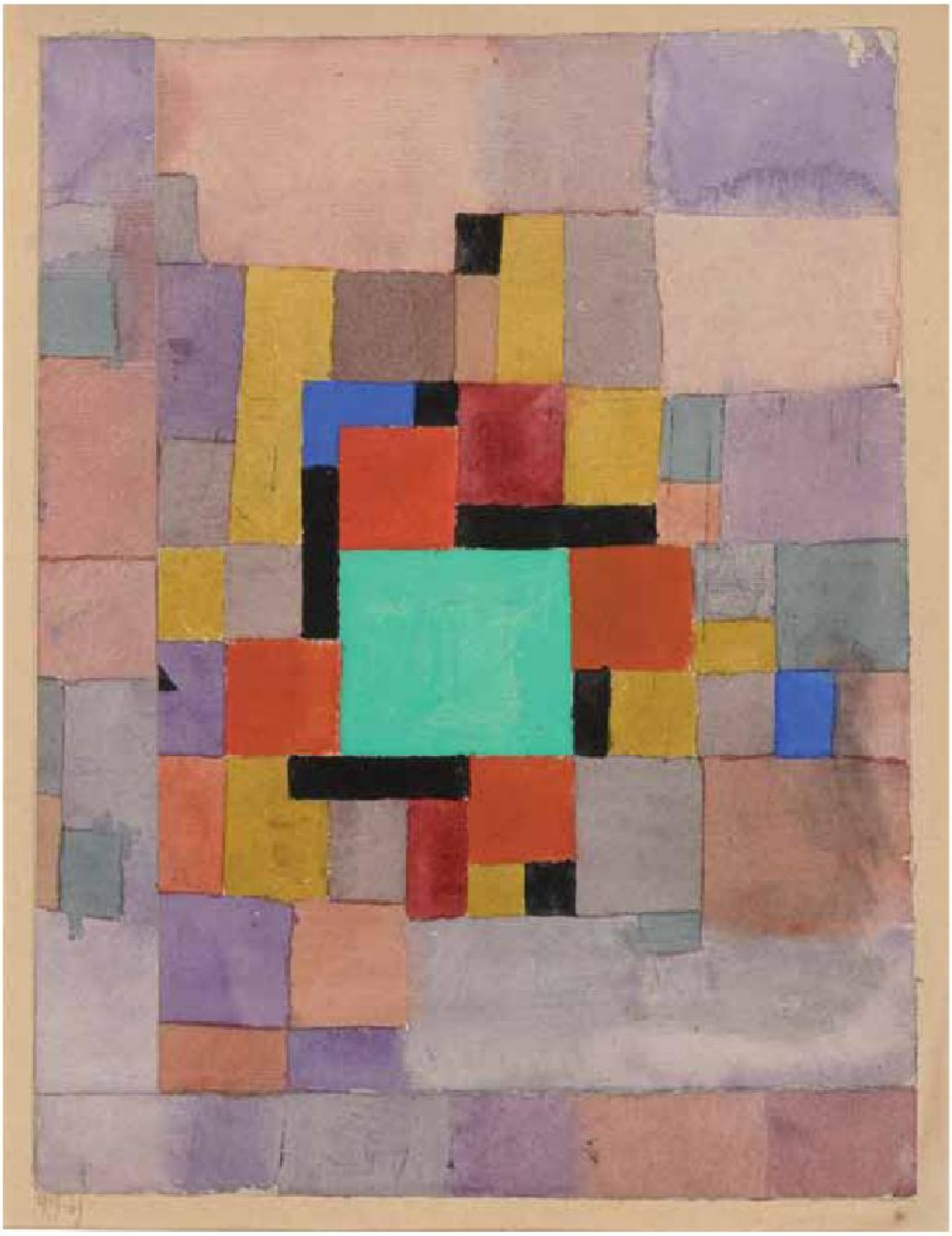
Works from 1918–1931

1. Ohne Titel (Untitled). 1918

oil on cardboard, verso: paper on muslin
15 x 32 cm (5 7/8 x 12 5/8 inches)

2. Mit dem grünen Quadrat (With the Green Square). 1919

watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
26 x 20 cm (10 1/4 x 7 7/8 inches)



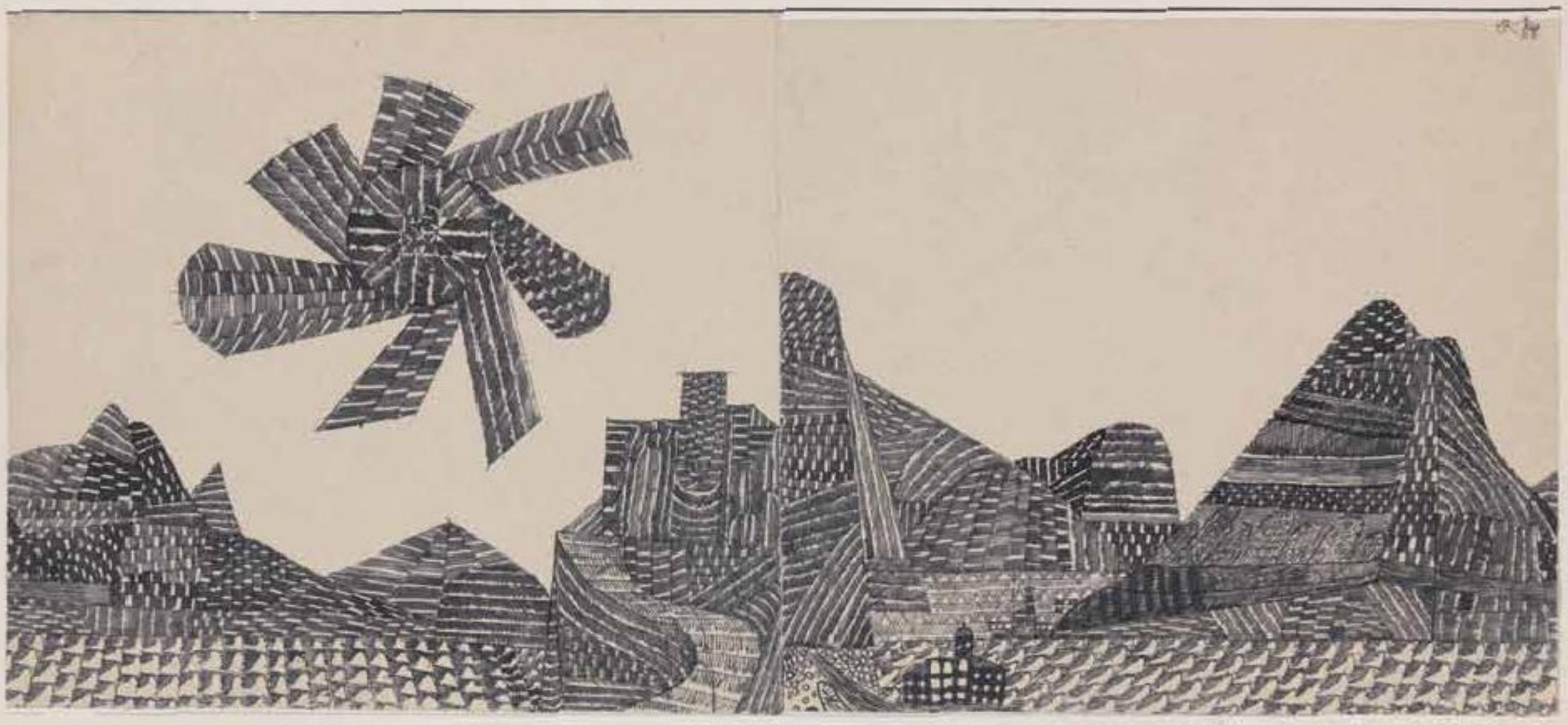
3. Dreitakt (Triple Time). 1919

watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on a second sheet of paper, cardboard
31.2 x 22.3 cm (12 5/16 x 8 3/4 inches)

3
Dreitant

4. Seelandschaft m. d. Himmelskörper (Lake Landscape with the Celestial Body). 1920

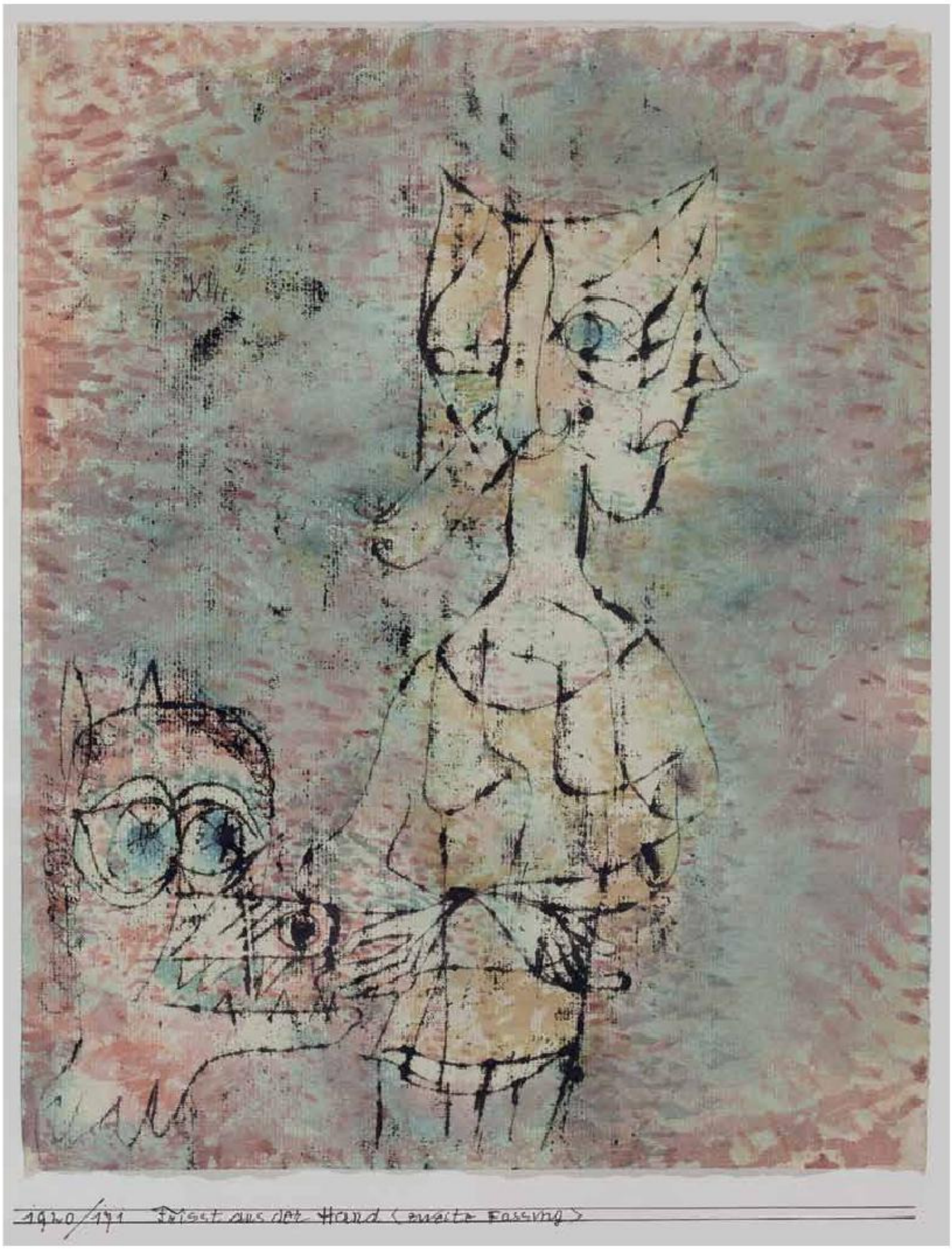
pen on paper laid down on cardboard
12.7 x 28.1 cm (5 x 11 inches)



1920/166 Landschaft mit Himmelstreppe

5. Frisst aus der Hand (Zweite Fassung) (Eats out of the Hand [Second Version]). 1920

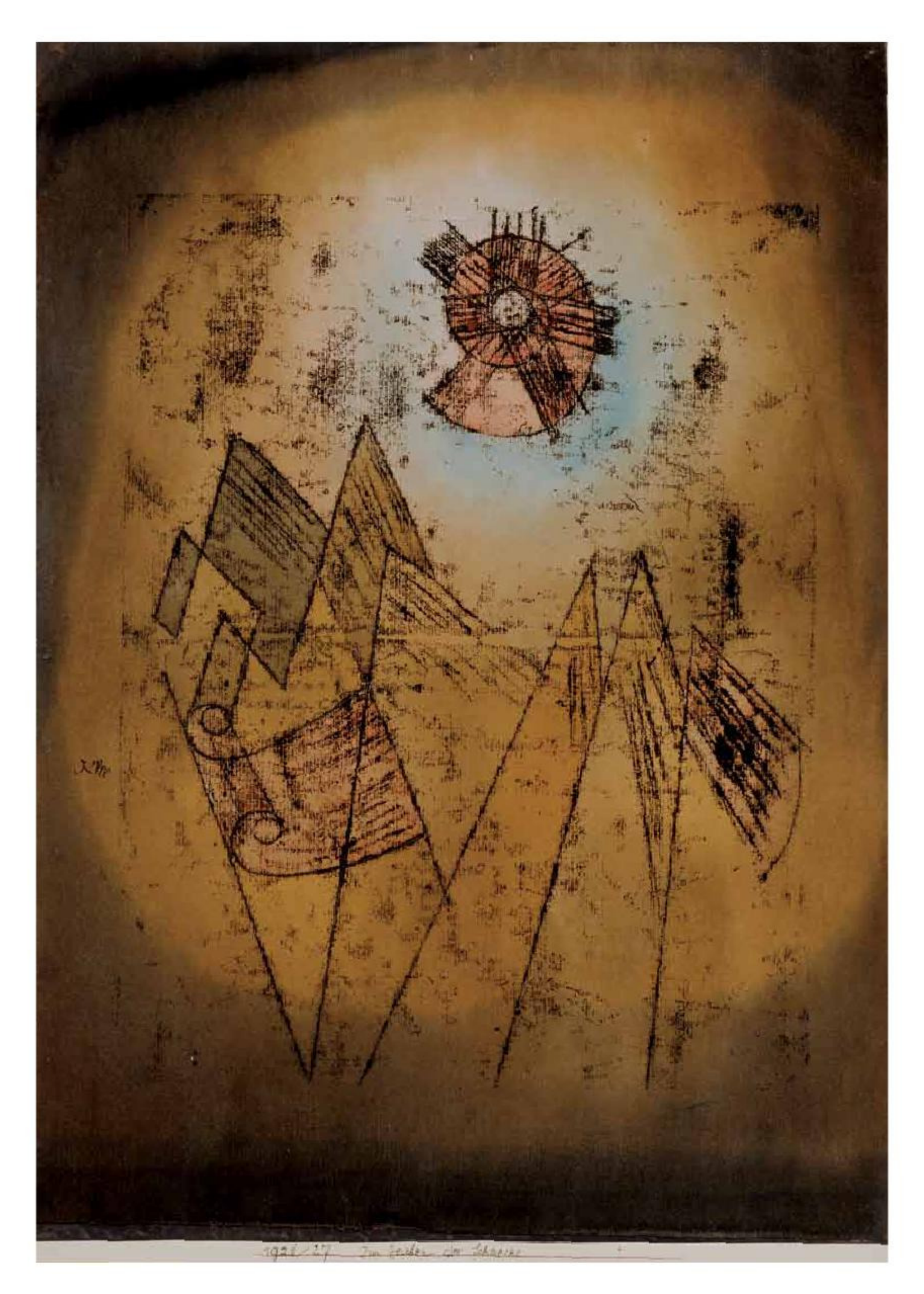
oil transfer and watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
30.4 x 24 cm (12 x 9 7/16 inches)



1970/71 Frisst aus der Hand (zweite Fassung)

6. Im Zeichen der Schnecke (Under the Sign of the Snail). 1921

oil transfer and watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
38.8 x 27.4 cm (15 1/4 x 11 13/16 inches)



1926/27 Im Zeichen der Schwere

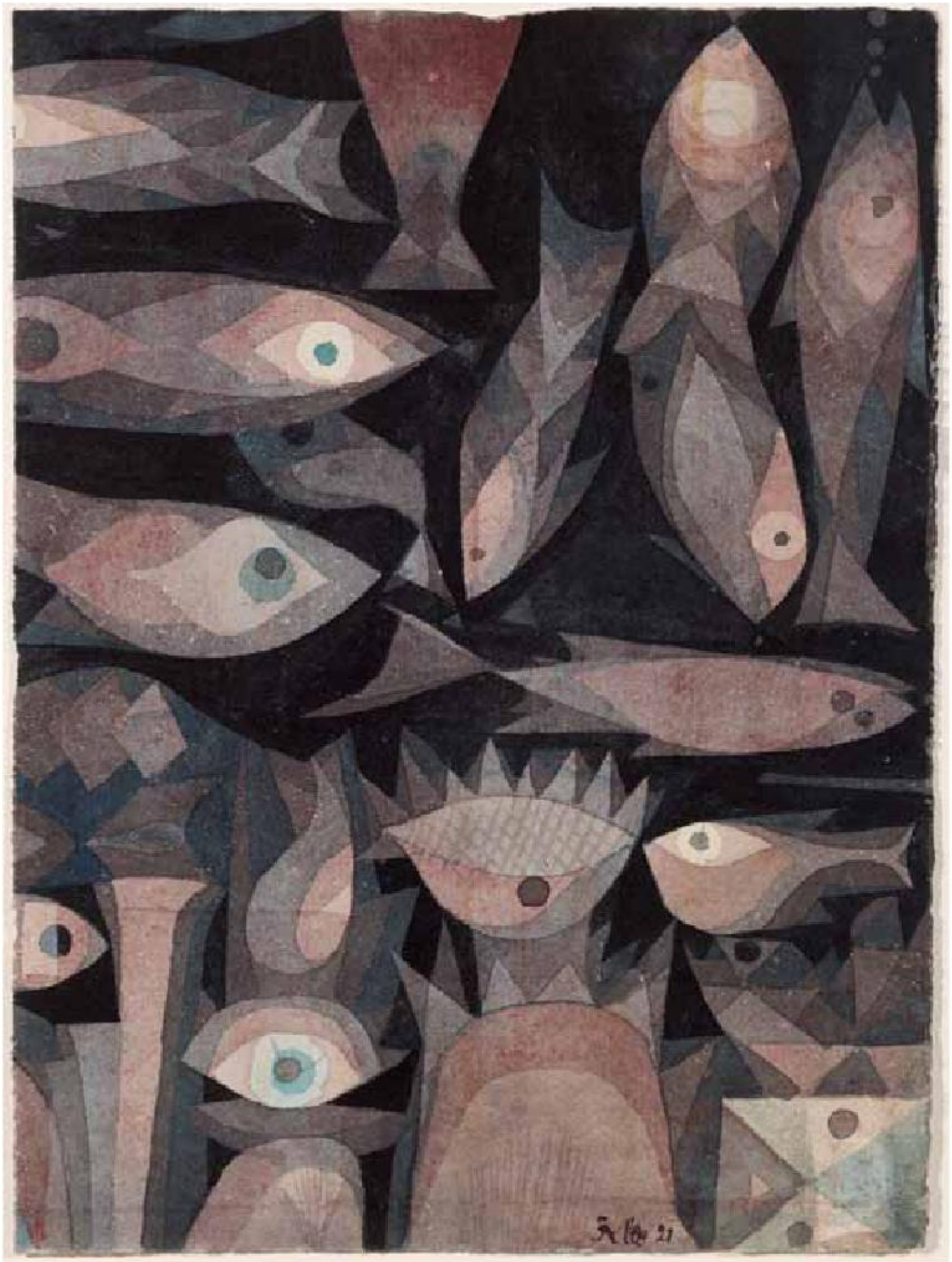
7. Das Tor der Nacht (The Gate of the Night). 1921

watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard
25 x 33 cm (9 13/16 x 13 inches)

1961/66 nach In der Nacht

8. Ohne Titel (Untitled). 1921

watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
21.6 x 16 cm (8 1/2 x 6 5/16 inches)



9. Fische in der Tiefe (Fish in the Deep). 1921

watercolor on paper laid down on a second sheet of paper, laid down on cardboard
16 x 21.7 cm ($6\frac{5}{16}$ x $8\frac{9}{16}$ inches)

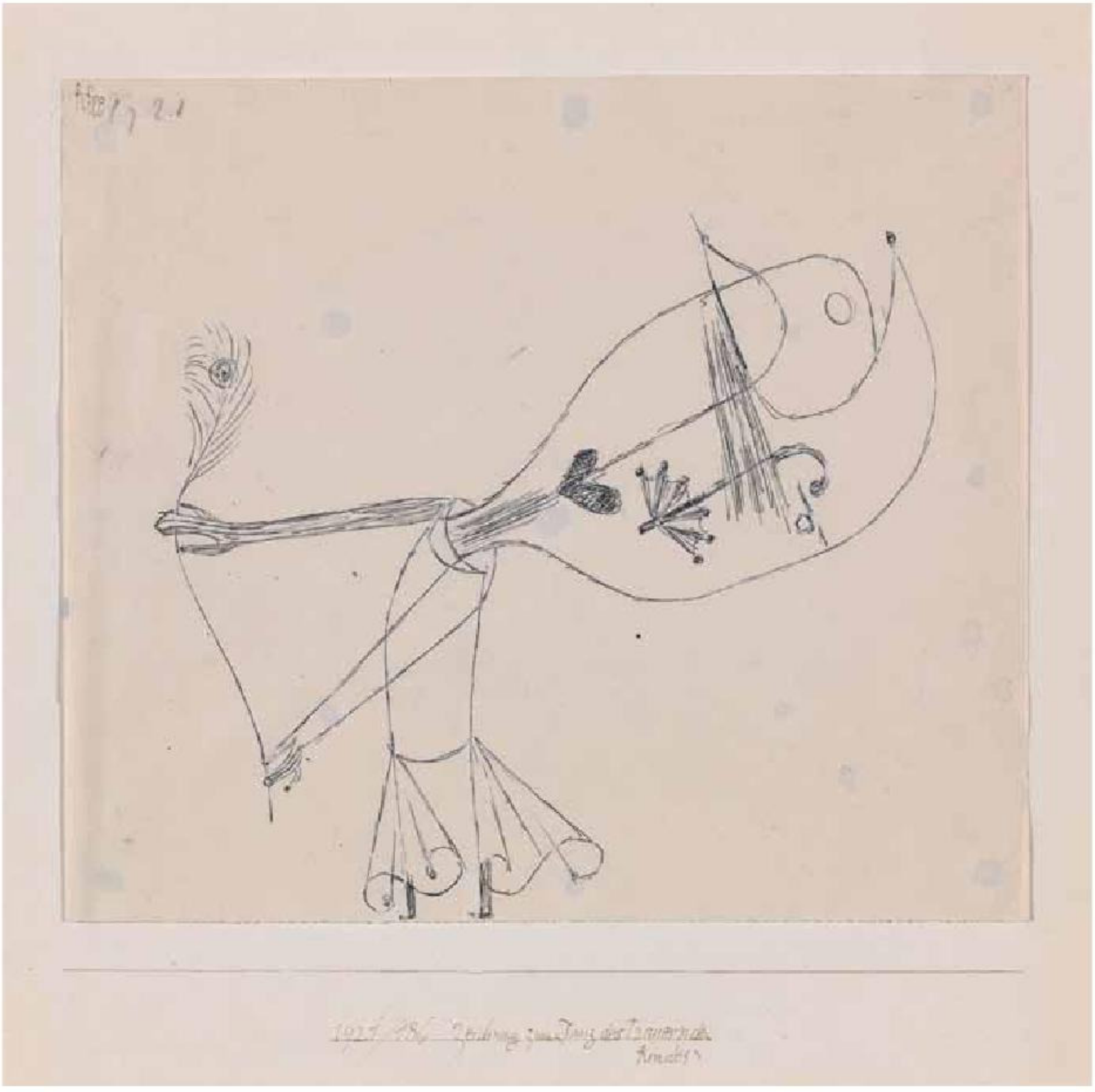
10. Läufer am Ziel (Runner at the Goal). 1921

watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard with gouache border
39.4 x 30.2 cm (15 1/2 x 11 7/8 inches)

1

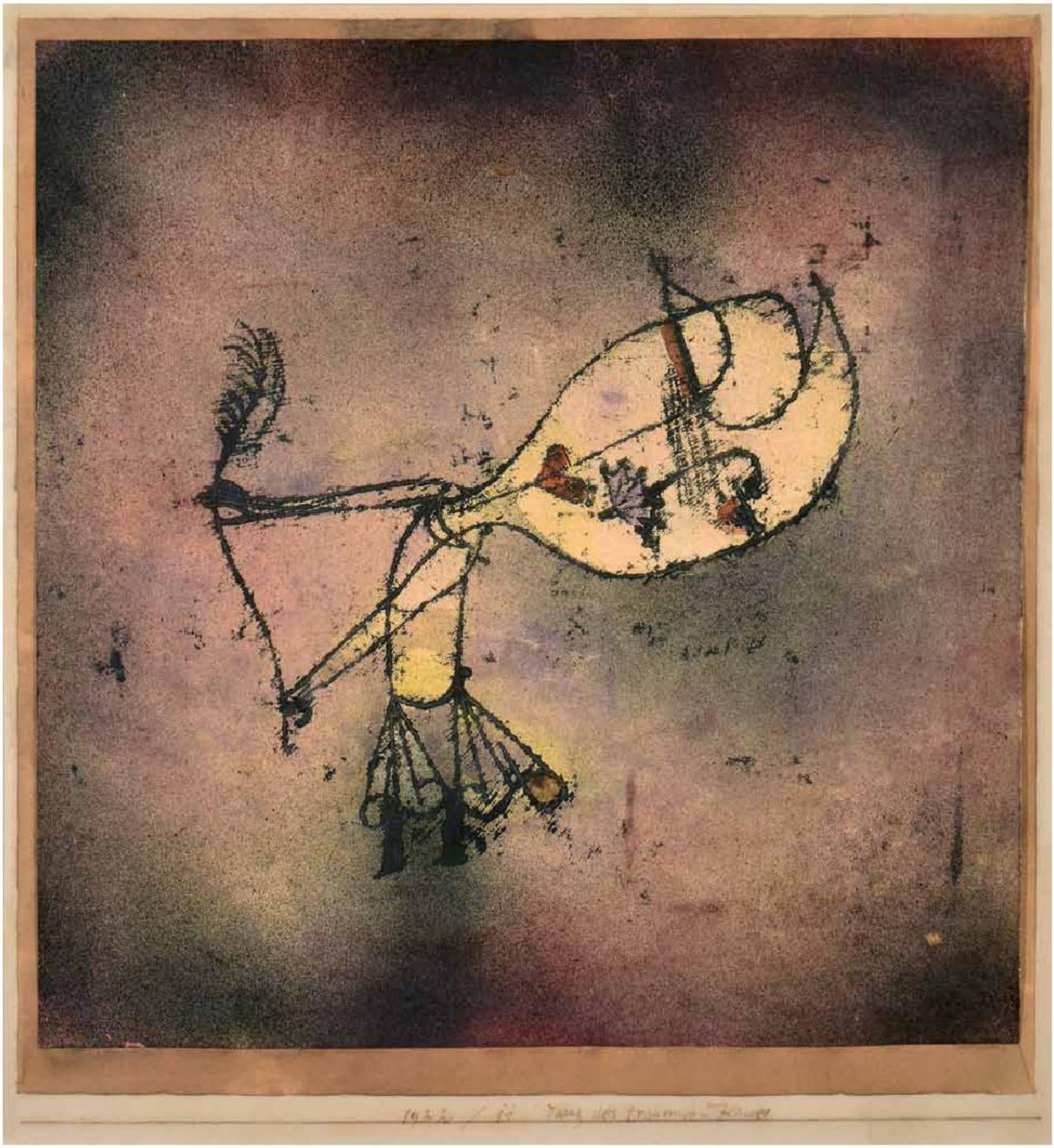
11. Zeichnung zum "Tanz des trauernden Kindes" (Drawing for "Dance of the Grieving Child"). 1921

pen on paper laid down on cardboard
19.2 x 22 cm (7 9/16 x 8 11/16 inches)



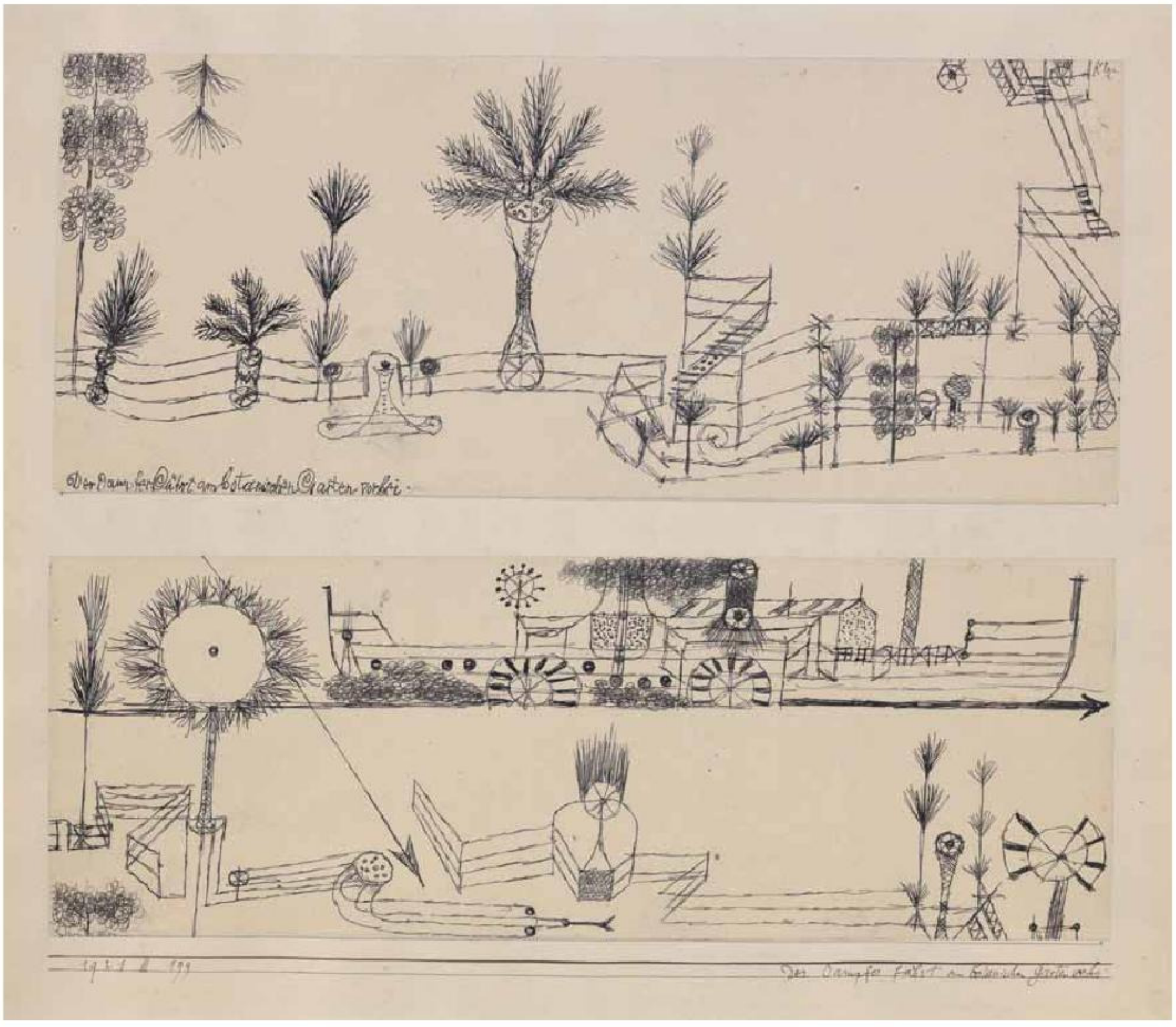
12. Tanz des trauernden Kindes (Dance of the Grieving Child). 1922

oil transfer, watercolor and ink, partially sprayed, on paper,
bordered with watercolor and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
29.2 x 27.3 cm (11 ½ x 11 ¾ inches)



13. Der Dampfer fährt am botanischen Garten vorbei (The Steamboat Passes by the Botanical Garden). 1921

pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
a) 11.9 x 28.9 cm (4 11/16 x 11 3/8 inches); b) 10.4 x 28.8 cm (4 1/8 x 11 5/16 inches)

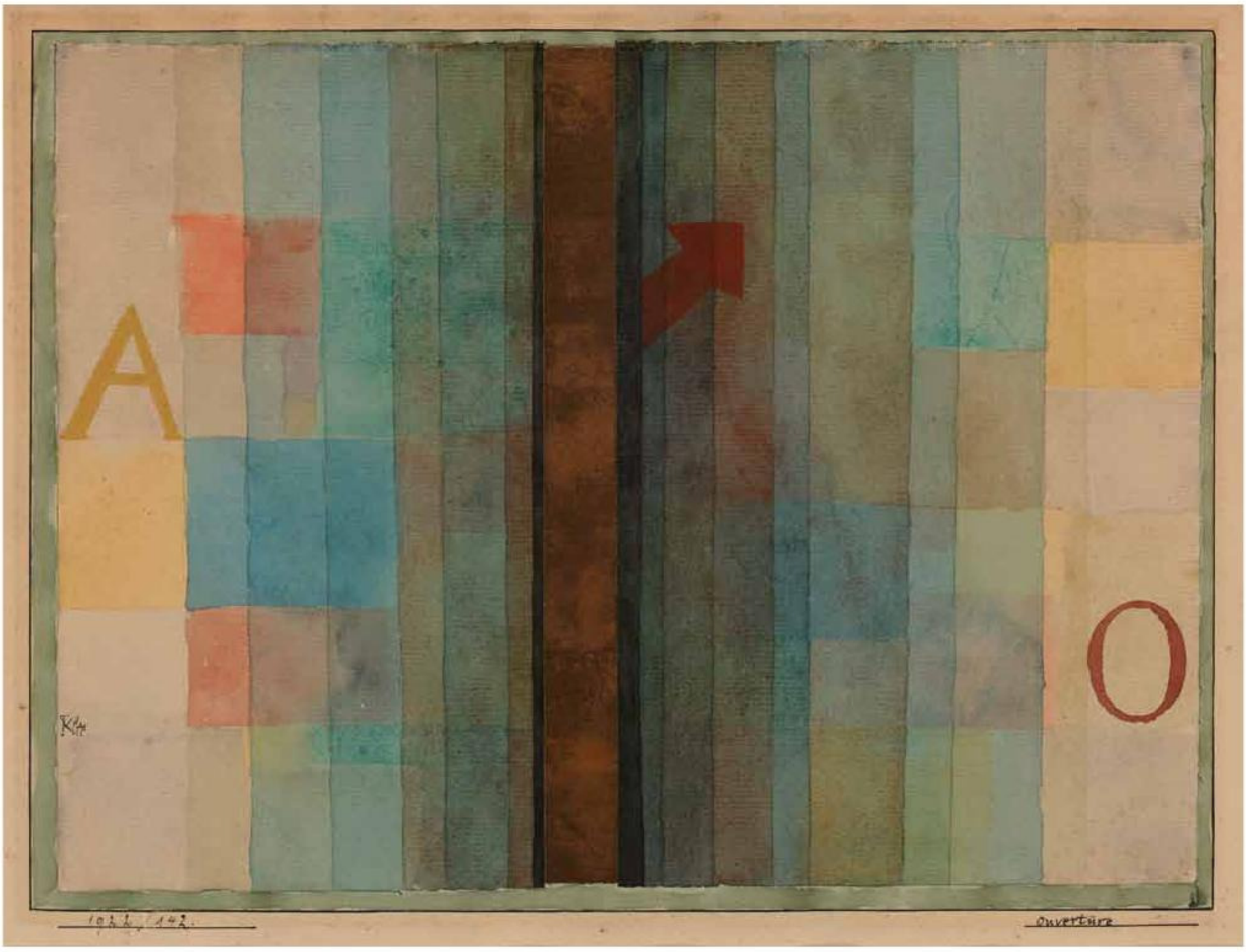


14. Wald-Einsiedelei (Hermitage in the Woods). 1921

oil on cardboard in its original frame
19.8 x 30.2 cm ($7\frac{13}{16}$ x $11\frac{7}{8}$ inches)

15. Ouvertüre (Overture). 1922

watercolor and pencil on paper divided and newly combined,
bordered with watercolor, pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
24 x 33 cm (9 7/16 x 13 inches)


A
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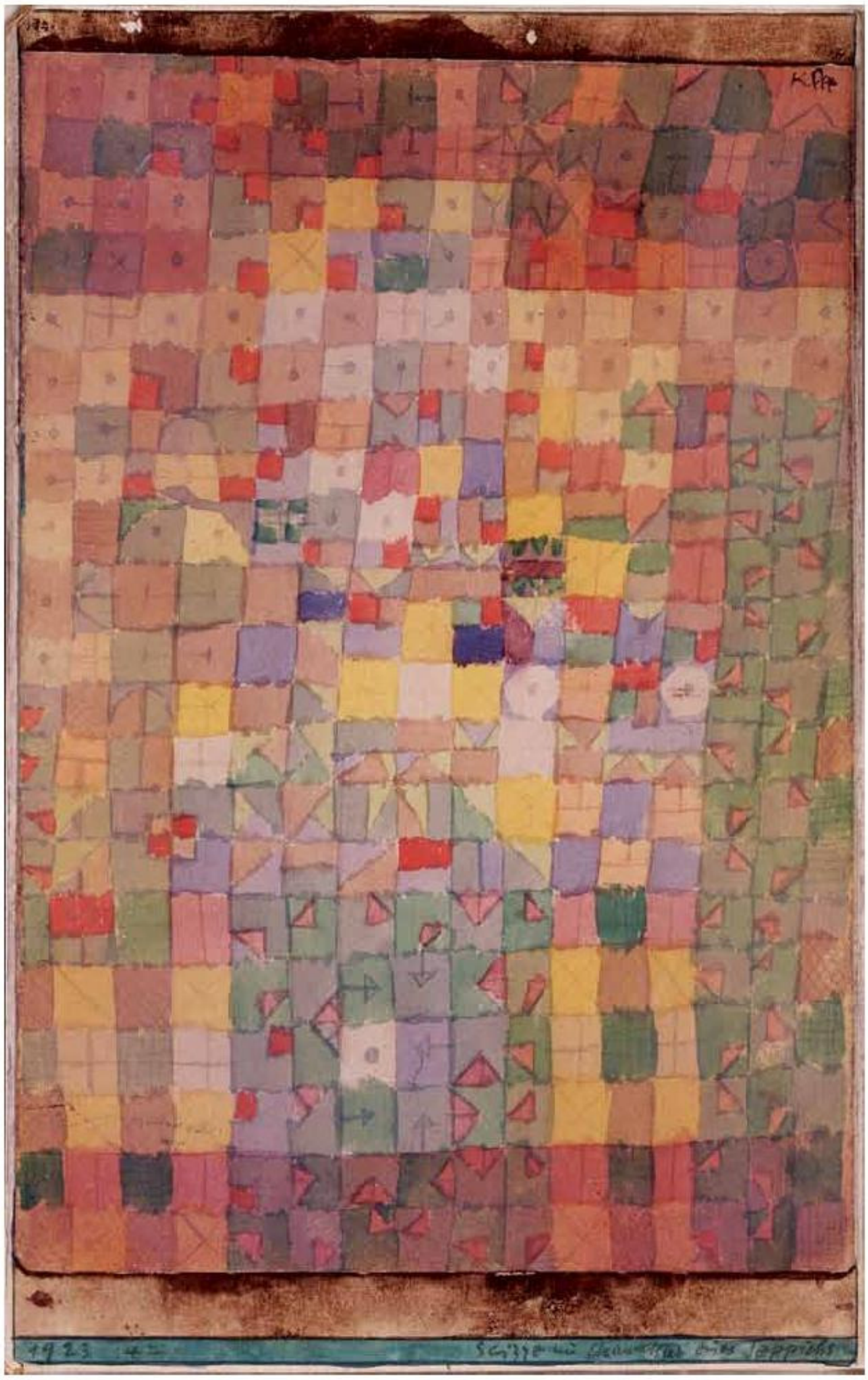
Ouverture



16. Scizze im Charakter eines Teppichs (Sketch in the Manner of a Carpet). 1923

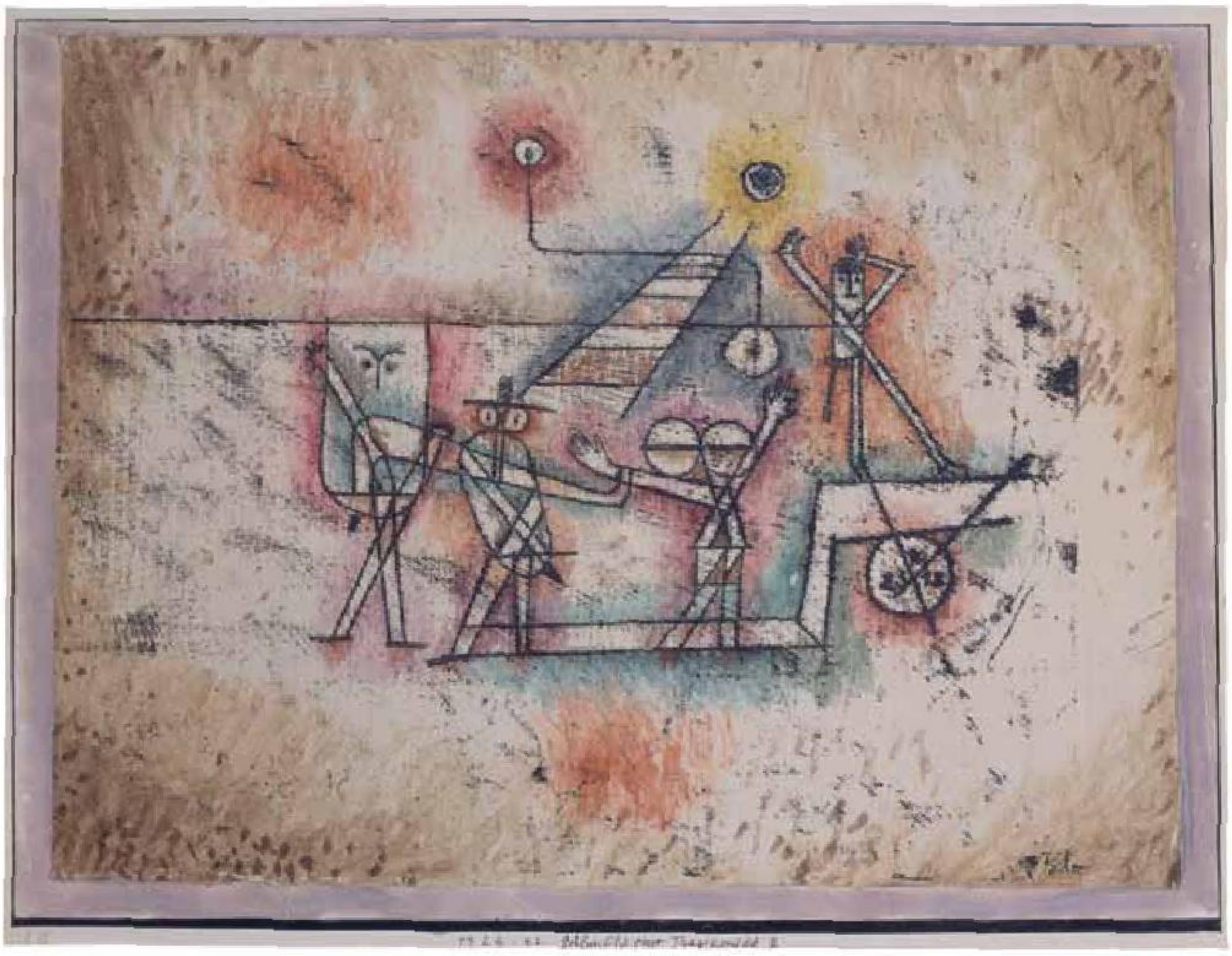
pen and watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard, above and beneath watercolor, and pen and ink edges
22 x 14.7 cm (8 11/16 x 5 13/16 inches)

17. Wand Teppich (Tapestry). 1923

oil transfer and watercolor on paper, bordered with gouache and pen and ink
on cardboard, lower edges with watercolor and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
32.5 x 24 cm (12 13/16 x 9 7/16 inches)

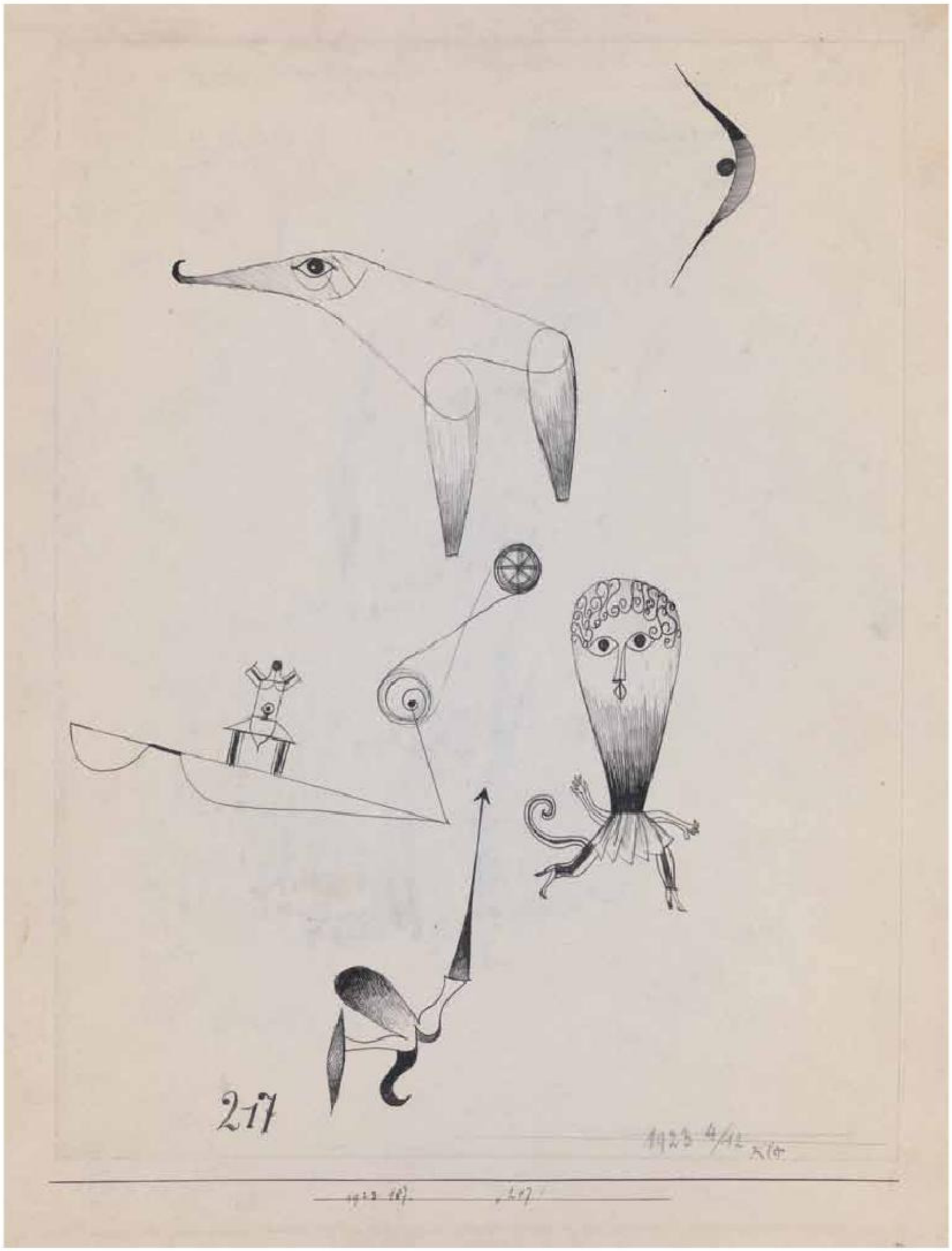
18. Schlussbild einer Tragikomödie (Final Scene of a Tragicomedy). 1923

oil transfer and watercolor on chalk-primed paper, upper and lower edges
with gouache and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
25 x 35 cm (9 13/16 x 13 3/4 inches)



19. "217". 1923

pen and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard
28.7 x 21.7 cm (11 5/6 x 8 9/16 inches)


217

20. Schwarzer Herold (Black Herald). 1924

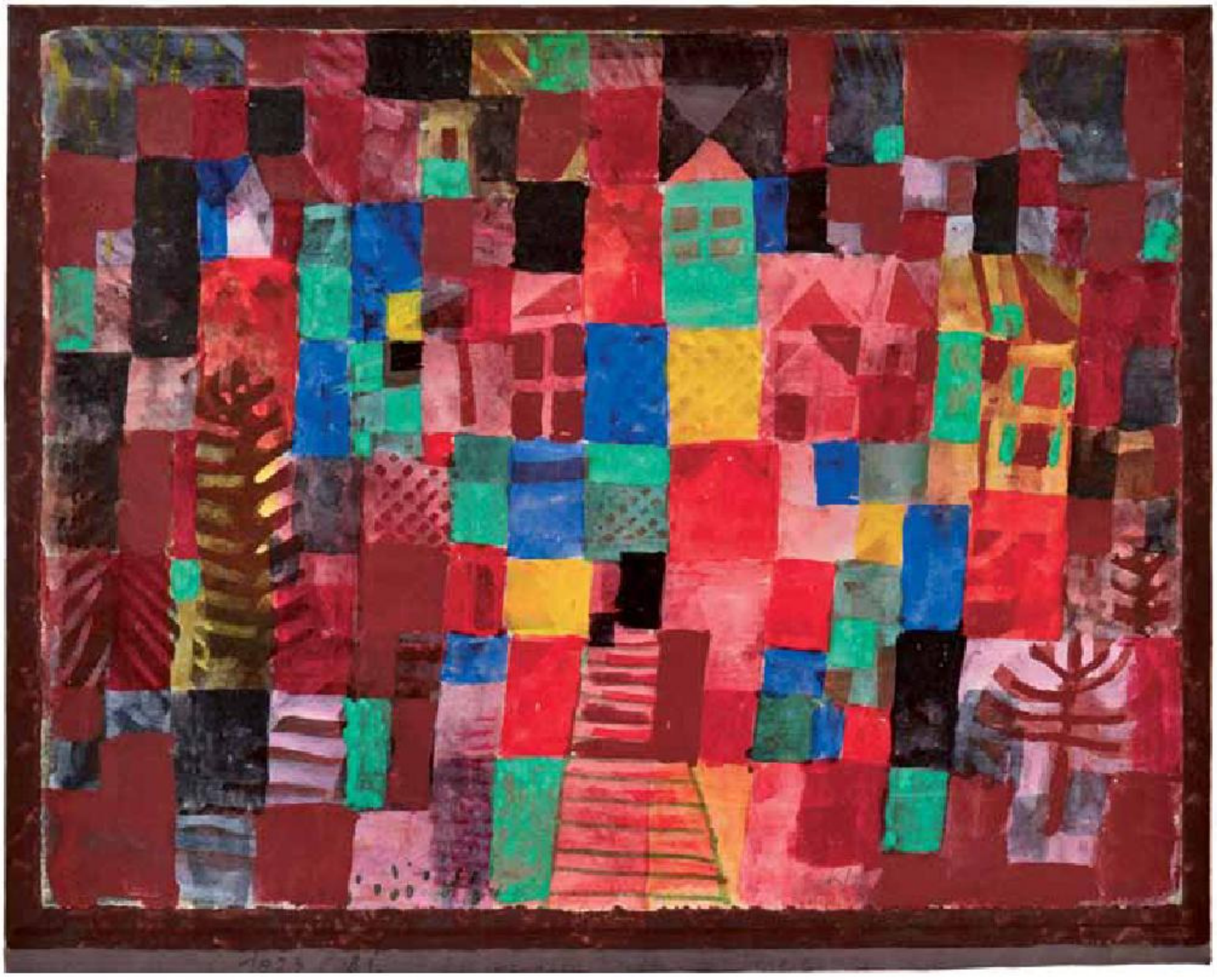
watercolor on colored paste-primed paper, bordered with gouache and pen and ink, lower edge with watercolor and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
30.5 x 20.2 cm (12 x 8 inches)

21. Die Erfinderin des Nestes (The Inventress of the Nest). 1925

watercolor on chalk-primed paper laid down on cardboard
27.6 x 22 cm (10 7/8 x 8 11/16 inches)

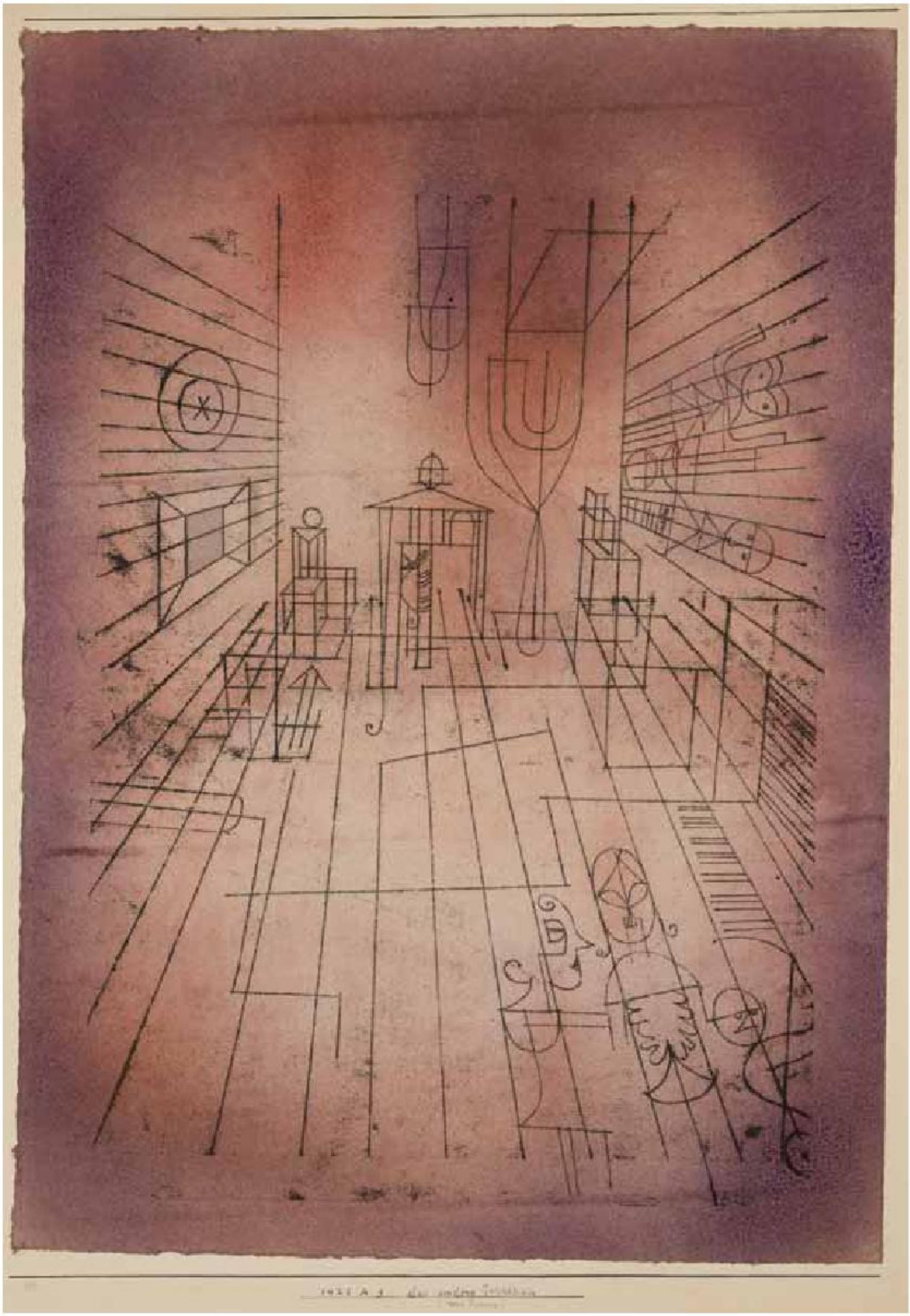
22. Häuserbild mit dem Treppenweg (Picture of Houses with Flight of Steps). 1923

watercolor on chalk-primed paper, bordered with gouache and pen and ink,
lower edge with gouache and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
26.7 x 33.3 cm (10 ½ x 13 inches)



23. Das andere Geisterzimmer (Neue Fassung) (The Other Ghost Chamber [New Version]). 1925

oil transfer and watercolor, partially sprayed, on paper laid down on cardboard
48 x 34 cm (19 x 13 3/8 inches)



24. Der Luftballon (The Balloon). 1926

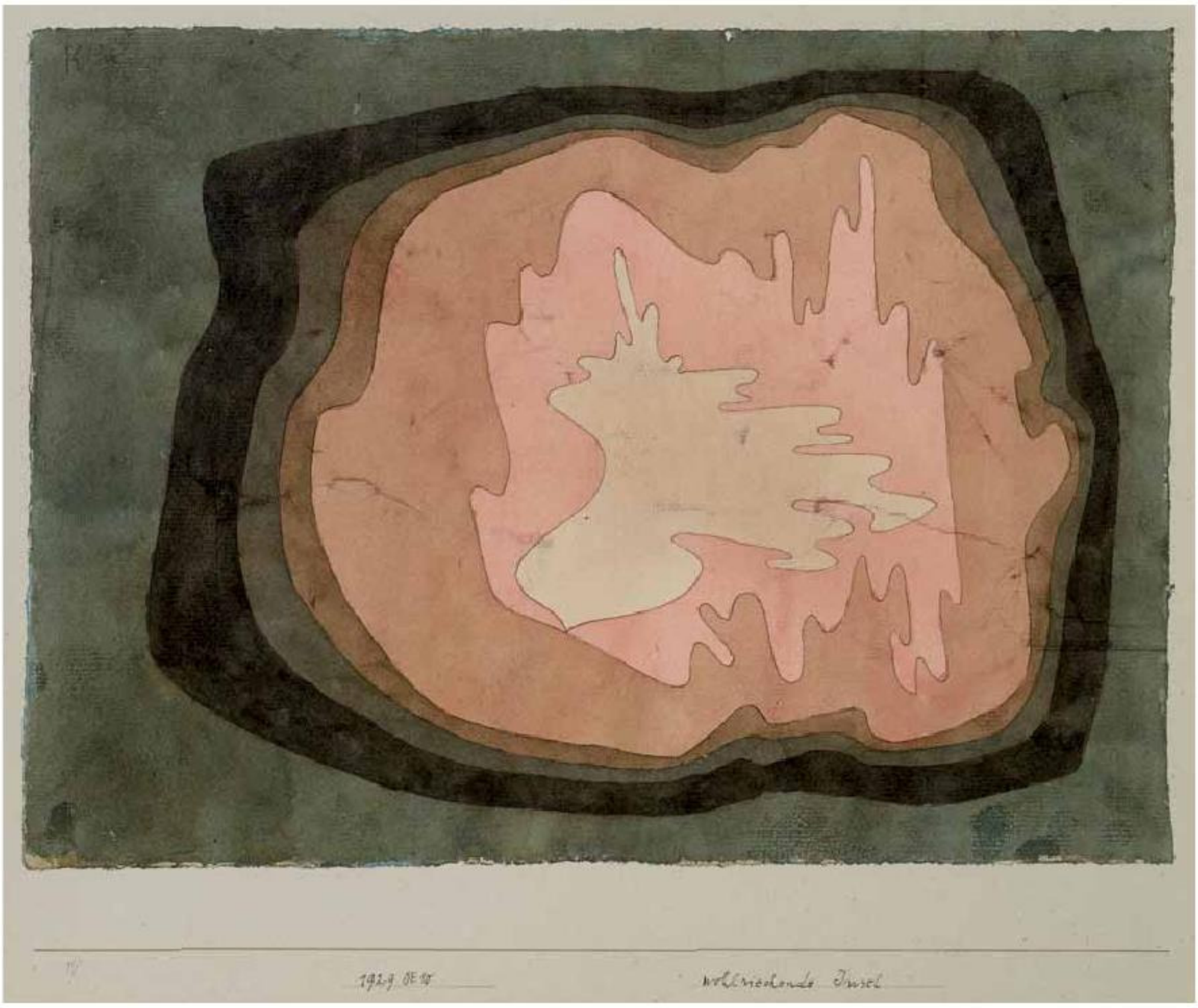
oil on black priming on cardboard in its original frame
32.5 x 33 cm (12 13/16 x 13 inches)

25. Die Flut schwemmt Städte (The Flood Washes Away Towns). 1927

pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
26.8 x 30.6 cm (10 ½ x 12 1/16 inches)

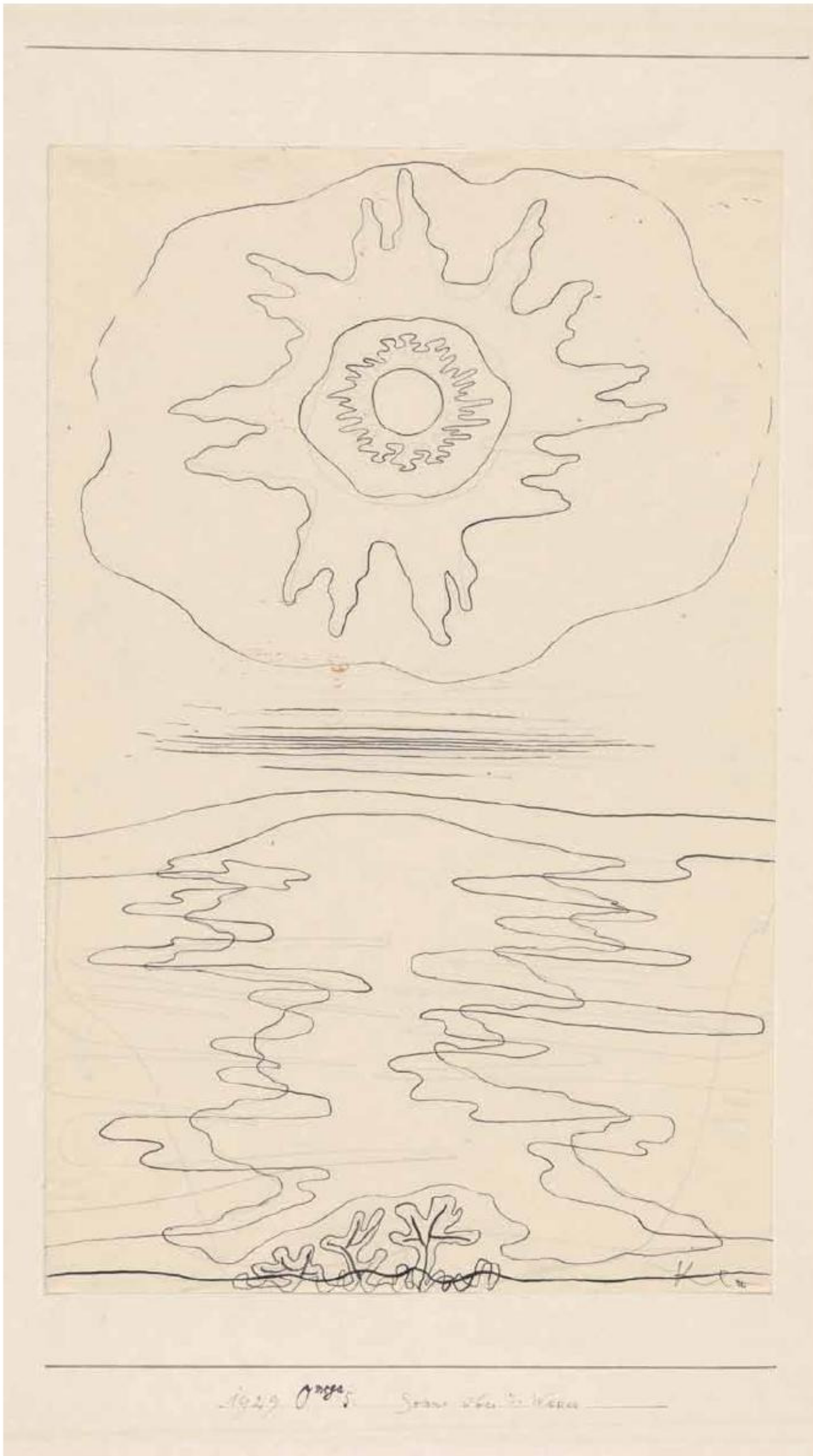
26. Wohlriechende Insel (Fragrant Island). 1929

watercolor and pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
23 x 31 cm (9 x 12 3/16 inches)


1924 OK
wolkenbildende Insel

27. Sonne über d. Wasser (Sun over the Water). 1929

pen and ink and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard
32.8 x 21 cm (13 x 8 ¼ inches)

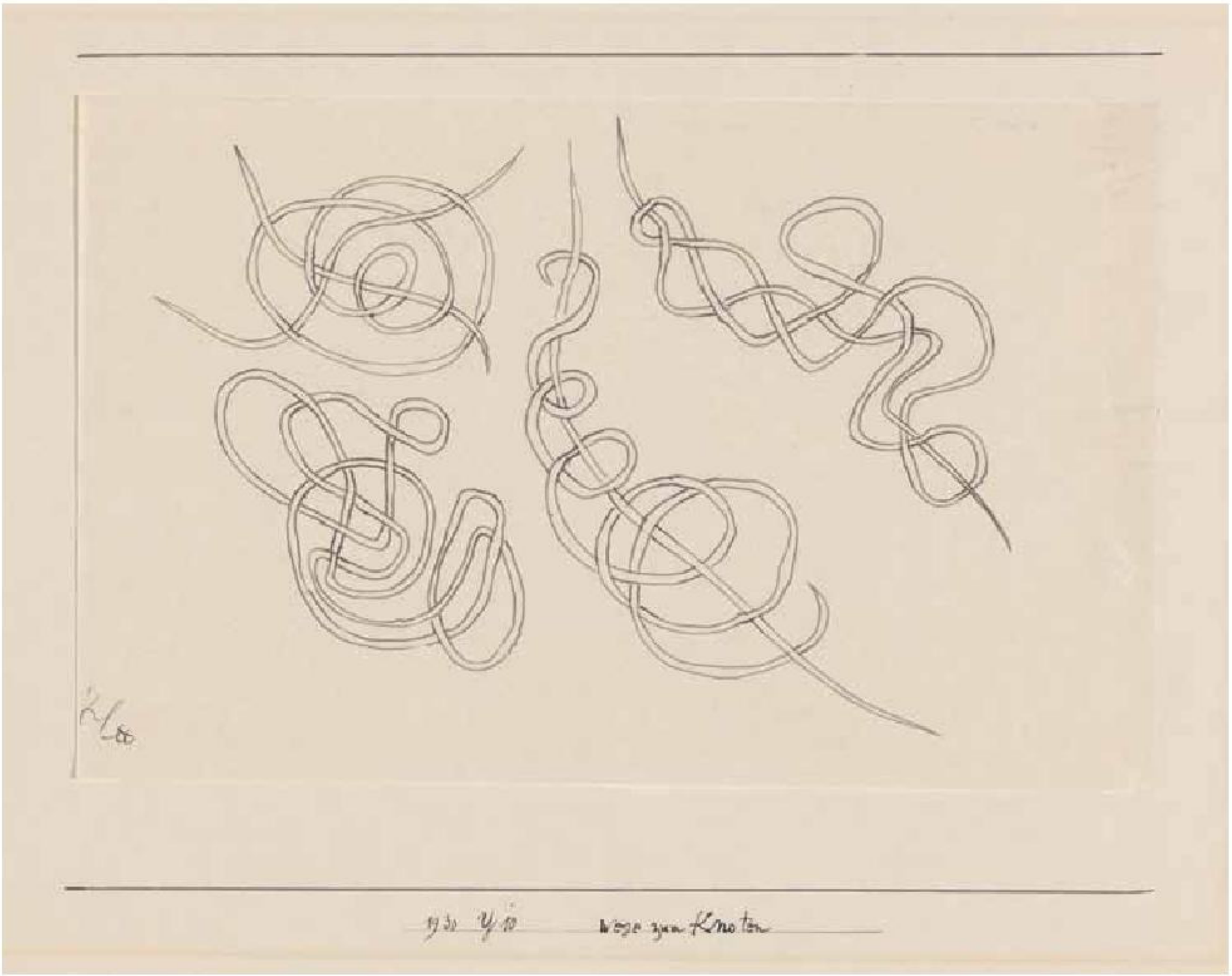


28. Die Schlange (The Snake). 1929

oil pigment and watercolor on wood, nailed on wooden strips,
verso: oil pigment and pen and ink on gauze; in its original frame
31.5 x 74.5 cm (12 3/8 x 30 inches)

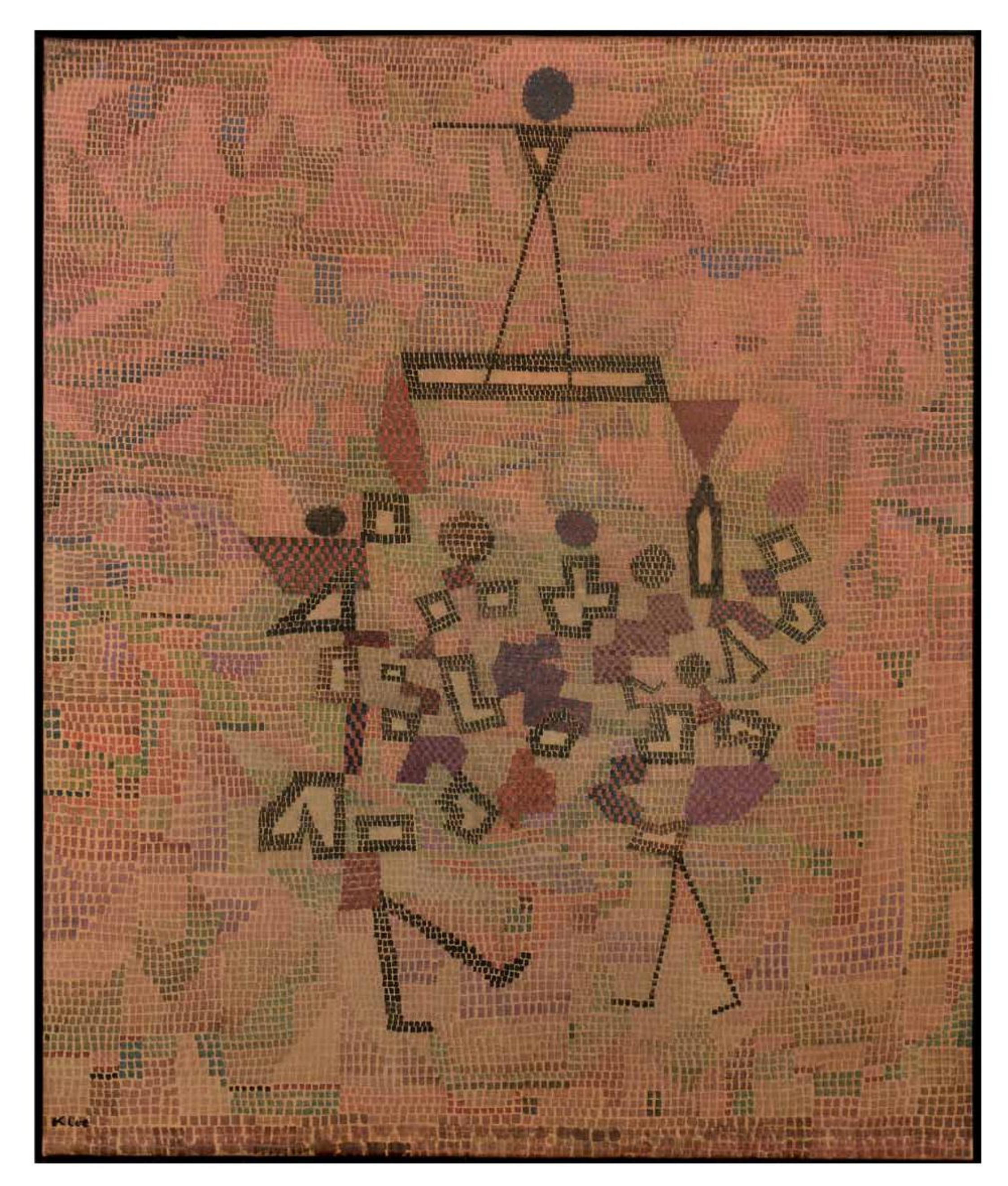
29. Wege zum Knoten (Paths to the Knot). 1930

pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
17.5 x 27.5 cm (6 7/8 x 10 13/16 inches)


Wege zum Knoten

30. Überbrücktes (Bridged). 1931

watercolor and pencil on cotton laid down on canvas in its original frame
60.4 x 50.5 cm (23 3/4 x 19 7/8 inches)


Klee

The Bauhaus Years: A Chronology

1918

December Klee is released from the army and returns to Munich for Christmas.

1919

January Joint exhibition with Kurt Schwitters and Johannes Molzahn at Galerie Der Sturm in Berlin.

February Rents a studio at Suresnes Castle in Schwabing, Munich, after being permanently discharged from the army.

April Invited to join the leftist Action Committee of Revolutionary Artists (an offshoot of the Novembergruppe), led by Hans Richter.

Summer Fails to succeed Adolf Hölzel at the Stuttgart Academy of Arts, despite recommendations from Oskar Schlemmer and Willi Baumeister.

Signs a three-year contact with the dealer Hans Goltz in Munich, which will be renewed in 1922.

1920

May–June First exhibition of Klee's work at Goltz's Galerie Neue Kunst in Munich, where 362 works are shown.

October Invited by Walter Gropius to teach at the Bauhaus in Weimar.

Autumn First monographs on Klee, written by Leopold Zahn and Hermann von Wedderkop.

Publication of Klee's essay "Farbe als Wissenschaft" (Color as science) in *Mitteilungen des deutschen Werkbundes.*

1921

Wilhelm Hausenstein publishes his monograph on Klee, *Kairuan oder eine Geschichte vom Maler Klee und von der Kunst dieses Zeitalters* (Kairouan, or the story of the painter Klee and of the art of this time).

January Klee takes up his post at the Bauhaus but continues to live in Munich, commuting fortnightly between Weimar and home. Fellow teachers include Gropius, Lyonel Feininger, Schlemmer, Johannes Itten, Hannes Meyer and Gerhard Marcks.

October Klee moves to Weimar.

November Until the following May, gives his "Lectures on Visual Form."

1922

April The bookbinding workshop at the Bauhaus, in which Klee is teaching, is dissolved.

July Vasily Kandinsky joins the Bauhaus teaching staff.

November Klee teaches color theory and becomes artistic advisor in the stained-glass workshop.

1923

August–September First International Exhibition of the Weimar Bauhaus. Klee's essay "Wege des Naturstudiums" (Way of studying nature) is published in *Staatliches Bauhaus-Weimar 1919–1923* to coincide with the exhibition.

October Teaches basic composition until the following February.

1924

January–February First American exhibition of Klee's work, organized by Katherine S. Dreier at the Société Anonyme (an association she founded with Marcel Duchamp in 1920 for the promotion and study of modern art), in the Heckscher Building on West 57th Street in Manhattan.

January Klee delivers the lecture "Über die moderne Kunst" (On modern art) to inaugurate his exhibition at Kunstverein Jena.

March Forms *Die Blaue Vier* with Kandinsky, Feininger and Alexej von Jawlensky, a group promoted chiefly on the west coast of the United States by Emmy Scheyer.

December The Bauhaus at Weimar officially closes.

1925

April The Bauhaus moves to Dessau. Klee is promoted to the title of Professor.

May–June Second one-man show at Goltz's Galerie Neue Kunst, after which his contract ends. Alfred Flechtheim, with galleries in Berlin and Düsseldorf, becomes his new dealer.

October–November First exhibition in France, at Galerie Vavin-Raspail, Paris.

November Klee's work is shown in the first Surrealist exhibition, at Galerie Pierre, Paris.

Publication of *Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch* (Pedagogical sketchbook), an extract of a lecture course from 1921–22.

Otto Ralfs founds the Klee Gesellschaft.

1926

July Klee shares a two-family house with Kandinsky.

October–November Travels to Italy in the summer: Elba, Pisa, Florence, Ravenna.

December Despite financial crisis, Gropius's Bauhaus is inaugurated in Dessau.

Klee teaches sculpture and painting classes as well as theoretical foundations.

1927

Summer Travels to Porquerolles and Corsica.

Teaches textile composition, theory of form, and painting.

1928

March–April Gropius, Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy leave the Bauhaus. Hannes Meyer becomes its new director.

July–August Klee travels to Paris and Brittany.

December Start of monthlong trip to Egypt.

1929

Joins Deutscher Künstlerbund.

In honor of Klee's fiftieth birthday, various exhibitions are staged in Dresden, Berlin and Paris. The exhibition at the Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Berlin, is shown in New York the following year.

Editions Cahiers d'art publishes Will Grohmann's monograph on Klee.

1930

March–April Sixty-three works by Klee are shown in a retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Spring Invited to teach at the Düsseldorf Academy.

August Ludwig Mies van der Rohe replaces Meyer as director of the Bauhaus.

1931

April Klee terminates post at the Bauhaus. Continues to live in Dessau.

October Joins faculty of the Düsseldorf Academy as a professor of painting.

1933

Klee is persecuted by the Nazis and returns to Switzerland.

List of Plates in order of appearance

1. Ohne Titel (Untitled). 1918 [cr 2062]
oil on cardboard, verso: paper on muslin
15 x 32 cm (5 7/8 x 12 5/8 inches)
inscribed on the verso in pencil: *Haltbarkeitsprobe: umstehende Arbeit steht Aquarell u. Tempera auf gefirnisstem Ölgrund, dieser ist geleimt, was die Haltbarkeit in Frage stellt, die Temperaschicht ist mit Leinölfirnis überzogen;* underneath in india ink: *A. Grund: materielle Technik A: alte, sehr trockene Ölmalerei (pastose) mit Bimstein und Wasser geschliffen, dann geleimt. B Malerei: Auf diesem Grund mit Aquarell und Temperafarben gemalt, diese Temperaschicht ist zum Schluss mit Leinölfirnis überzogen (aus dem Jahr 1918). Die Haltbarkeit ist anno 1928 besser als erwartet. Klee*
Private collection, Switzerland, on permanent loan at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

2. Mit dem grünen Quadrat (With the Green Square). 1919,69
watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
26 x 20 cm (10 1/4 x 7 7/8 inches)
signed on upper right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower left: *1919.69.*
Collection of Gretchen and John Berggruen

3. Dreitakt (Triple Time). 1919,68
watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on a second sheet of paper, cardboard
31.2 x 22.3 cm (12 5/16 x 8 3/4 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed lower left: *1919.68.*; on the cardboard edge center: *Dreitakt*;
lower left: *SC.*
Private collection

4. Seelandschaft m. d Himmelskörper (Lake Landscape with the Celestial Body). 1920,166
pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
12.7 x 28.1 cm (5 x 11 inches)
signed upper right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard edge; lower left: *1920. /166.*;
lower right: *Seelandschaft m. d. Himmelskörper*
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

5. Frisst aus der Hand (Zweite Fassung) (Eats out of the Hand [Second Version]). 1920,171
oil transfer and watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
30.4 x 24 cm (12 x 9 7/16 inches)
signed upper left: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower left: *1920/171 Frisst aus der Hand (zweite Fassung)*
Private collection

6. Im Zeichen der Schnecke (Under the Sign of the Snail). 1921,27
oil transfer and watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
38.8 x 27.4 cm (15 1/4 x 10 13/16 inches)
signed center left: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower center: *1921/ 27 Im Zeichen der Schnecke †*
Private collection

7. Das Tor der Nacht (The Gate of the Night). 1921,56
watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard
25 x 33 cm (9 13/16 x 13 inches)
signed center right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower center: *1921/56 das Tor der Nacht*
Private collection, Trieste

8. Ohne Titel (Untitled). 1921 [cr 2062]
watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard
21.6 x 16 cm (8 1/2 x 6 5/16 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed lower right: *21*
Private collection

9. Fische in der Tiefe (Fish in the Deep). 1921,87
watercolor on paper laid down on a second sheet of paper, laid down on cardboard
16 x 21.7 cm (6 5/15 x 8 9/16 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower left: *1921 / 87*; lower right: *Fische in der Tiefe x*;
verso: *1921 / 87 Fische in der Tiefe Klee*
Private collection, New York

10. Läufer am Ziel (Runner at the Goal). 1921,105
watercolor and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard with gouache border
39.4 x 30.2 cm (15 1/2 x 11 7/8 inches)
signed middle right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard on the edge lower left: *1921 105 Läufer am Ziel*;
in pencil lower left: *S.Cl.*
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Estate of Karl Nierendorf, By purchase 48.1172.55

11. Zeichnung zum "Tanz des trauernden Kindes"
(Drawing for "Dance of the Grieving Child"). 1921,186
pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
19.2 x 22 cm (7 9/16 x 8 11/16 inches)
signed upper left: *Klee*
inscribed upper left with pencil: *1921*; on the cardboard edge lower center:
1921 / 186 Zeichnung zum 'Tanz des trauernden; below: *Kindes'*
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

12. Tanz des trauernden Kindes (Dance of the Grieving Child). 1922,11
oil transfer, watercolor and ink, partially sprayed, on paper,
bordered with watercolor and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
29.2 x 27.3 cm (11 1/2 x 10 3/4 inches)
signed lower center: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard border lower center: *1922 / 11 Tanz des trauernden Kindes*
Collection of Michael and Judy Steinhardt, New York

13. Der Dampfer fährt am botanischen Garten vorbei
(The Steamboat Passes by the Botanical Garden). 1921,199
pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
a) 11.9 x 28.9 cm (4 11/16 x 11 3/8 inches); b) 10.4 x 28.8 cm (4 1/8 x 11 5/16 inches)
signed on sheet a) upper right: *Klee*
inscribed on sheet a) lower left: *Der Dampfer fährt am botanischen Garten vorbei.*;
on the cardboard double border lower left: *1921 /// 199*;
lower right: *Der Dampfer fährt am botanischen Garten vorbei*
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

14. Wald-Einsiedelei (Hermitage in the Woods). 1921,225
oil on cardboard in its original frame
19.8 x 30.2 cm (7 13/16 x 11 7/8 inches)
signed lower right, faded: *Klee*
originally inscribed on the verso on the upper frame ledge: *Wald-einsiedelei 1921 225 Klee*
Private collection, Switzerland, on permanent loan at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

15. Ouvertüre (Overture). 1922,142
watercolor and pencil on paper divided and newly combined, bordered with watercolor,
pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
24 x 33 cm (9 7/16 x 13 inches)
signed lower left: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower left: *1922 / 142.*; lower right: *Ouvertüre*
Collection of Alexander Berggruen

16. Scizze im Charakter eines Teppichs (Sketch in the Manner of a Carpet). 1923,142
pen and watercolor on paper laid down on cardboard, above and beneath watercolor, and pen and ink edges
22 x 14.7 cm (8 11/16 x 5 13/16 inches)
signed upper right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard on the edge lower left: *1923 142*;
lower right: *Scizze im Charakter eines Teppichs*
Denver Art Museum Collection: Gift of Katherine C. Detre, 1981.12

17. Wand Teppich (Tapestry). 1923,167
oil transfer and watercolor on paper, bordered with gouache and pen and ink on cardboard, lower edges with watercolor and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
32.5 x 24 cm (12 13/16 x 9 7/16 inches)
inscribed lower left on the cardboard: *1923 167*; lower right: *Wand Teppich*
Private collection

18. Schlussbild einer Tragikomödie (Final Scene of a Tragicomedy). 1923,144
oil transfer and watercolor on chalk-primed paper, upper and lower edges with gouache and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
25 x 35 cm (9 13/16 x 13 3/4 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard lower center: *1923 144 Schlussbild einer Tragikomödie*;
lower left with pencil: *III*
Collection of Laetitia Malingue

19. "217". 1923,187
pen and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard
28.7 x 21.7 cm (11 5/6 x 8 9/16 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed lower right with pencil: *1923 4/12*;
on the cardboard edge lower center: *1923. 187. "217"*
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

20. Schwarzer Herold (Black Herald). 1924,117
watercolor on colored paste-primed paper, bordered with gouache and pen and ink, lower edge with watercolor and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
30.5 x 20.2 cm (12 x 8 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard on the edge lower left: *1924 117.*;
lower right: *Schwarzer Herold*;
on the cardboard: *für Walter Dexel freundnachbarlich, Klee*
Private collection, New York

21. Die Erfinderin des Nestes (The Inventress of the Nest). 1925,33 (M 3)
watercolor on chalk-primed paper laid down on cardboard
27.6 x 22 cm (10 7/8 x 8 11/16 inches)
signed lower center: *Klee*
inscribed upper left with pencil: *25 2 12*; on the cardboard edge, lower center:
1925 m. 3. die Erfinderin des Nestes; lower left with pencil: *Sg. K Privatbes*
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

22. Häuserbild mit dem Treppenweg (Picture of Houses with Flight of Steps). 1923,31
watercolor on chalk-primed paper, bordered with gouache and pen and ink,
lower edge with gouache and pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
26.7 x 33.3 cm (10 ½ x 13 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard's edge lower center: *1923 /// 31.*
Häuserbild mit dem Treppenweg
Collection of Michael and Judy Steinhardt, New York

23. Das andere Geisterzimmer (Neue Fassung)
(The Other Ghost Chamber [New Version]). 1925,109 (A 9)
oil transfer and watercolor, partially sprayed, on paper laid down on cardboard
48 x 34 cm (19 x 13 3/8 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard edge, lower center: *1925 A. 9. das andere Geisterzimmer*;
below: *(neue Fassung)*; lower left with pencil: *VIII*
Private collection

24. Der Luftballon (The Balloon). 1926,153 (F 3)
oil on black priming on cardboard in its original frame
32.5 x 33 cm (12 13/16 x 13 inches)
signed upper left: *Klee*
inscribed upper left: *1926 F.3.*; on the verso and frame: *1926 F. 3 Luftballon Klee*
Private collection, Switzerland

25. Die Flut schwemmt Städte (The Flood Washes Away Towns). 1927,50 (N 10)
pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
26.8 x 30.6 cm (10 ½ x 12 1/16 inches)
signed upper left: *Klee*
inscribed upper left with pencil: *die Flut schwemmt Städte*;
on the cardboard edge, lower center: *1927 N 10 die Flut schwemmt Städte*
Collection of Michael and Judy Steinhardt, New York

26. Wohlriechende Insel (Fragrant Island). 1929,280 (OE 10)
watercolor and pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
23 x 31 cm (9 x 12 3/16 inches)
signed upper left: *Klee*
Private collection, Trieste

27. Sonne über d. Wasser (Sun over the Water). 1929,295 (Omega 5)
pen and ink and pencil on paper laid down on cardboard
32.8 x 21 cm (13 x 8 1/4 inches)
signed lower right: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard edge, lower center: *1929 Omega H5. Sonne über d. Wasser*
Private collection, Switzerland, on permanent loan at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

28. Die Schlange (The Snake). 1929,341 (3 H 41)
oil pigment and watercolor on wood, nailed on wooden strips, verso: oil pigment and pen and ink on gauze; in its original frame
31.5 x 74.5 cm (12 3/8 x 30 inches)
signed upper left: *Klee*
inscribed upper left: *1929.3.H.41*; verso on the upper wooden strip:
1929 "3.H.1." "Die Schlange" Klee Cl.14
Private collection

29. Wege zum Knoten (Paths to the Knot). 1930,150 (Y 10)
pen and ink on paper laid down on cardboard
17.5 x 27.5 cm (6 7/8 x 10 13/16 inches)
signed lower left: *Klee*
inscribed on the cardboard edge, lower center: *1930 Y 10 Wege zum Knoten*
Private collection, Switzerland, on permanent loan at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

30. Überbrücktes (Bridged). 1931,153 (R13)
watercolor and pencil on cotton laid down on canvas in its original frame
60.4 x 50.5 cm (23 3/4 x 19 7/8 inches)
signed lower left: *Klee*
inscribed verso upper left on the stretcher with pen, faded: *1931 R 13*;
upper right: *"Überbrücktes" Klee*
Private collection, New York

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Cover:
Ouvertüre (Overture). 1922
watercolor and pencil on paper divided and newly combined, bordered with watercolor, pen and ink, laid down on cardboard
24 x 33 cm (9 7/16 x 13 inches)
[plate 15]

p. 5:
Paul Klee with his cat Fripouille, Possenhofen, before the watercolor *Allerseelen-Bild* (*All Souls' Picture*), 1921,113
11.9 x 8.7 cm (4 ¾ x 3 ½ inches)
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Klee Family Donation

p. 8:
Paul Klee in his studio at the Bauhaus, Weimar, 1924
6.4 x 8.2 cm (2 ½ x 3 ¼ inches)
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Klee Family Donation

p. 92:
Paul Klee, Munich, 1911
10.3 x 8.5 cm (4 x 3 ¼ inches)
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Klee Family Donation

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Klee